

SPRING EDITION 2019

# Heart & Soul

YOUR GENEROSITY IN ACTION



*Grateful WCH patient Rosalind Gill (R) with physiotherapist Hari Gopalakrishnan Nair*

# From pain to empowerment: How WCH is **revolutionizing** chronic pain care

To help improve the lives of people living with persistent pain and streamline access to pain management services, Women's College Hospital has partnered with local pain clinics across the GTA to create the Toronto Academic Pain Management Institute (TAPMI) – a comprehensive, interdisciplinary program serving as the hub for chronic pain care in Toronto. For patients like Rosalind, TAPMI is providing a revolutionary approach to chronic pain management.

Rosalind Gill struggled with chronic hip pain for years and even feared she would need a hip replacement before finally receiving a diagnosis – fibromyalgia. A complex chronic condition, fibromyalgia causes musculoskeletal pain that can be difficult to manage. Treatment often involves medication but Rosalind was hoping to find a more holistic approach.

“After receiving my diagnosis, I began looking for alternatives to drug therapy,” she says. “I wanted to find a clinic that supported my desire to manage my pain without medication. That's when I was referred to Women's College Hospital's Toronto Academic Pain Management Institute.”

Rosalind enrolled in the Institute's Pain University program – a nine-week course designed to help patients with chronic pain conditions like fibromyalgia understand where their pain comes from and how it can be managed using a combination of approaches including exercise, cognitive behavioural therapy, and lifestyle changes. A revolutionary component of the course is its focus on educating patients about their pain – an aspect of treatment that is often overlooked.



*TAPMI patient Rosalind Gill*

Research shows that for people who are dealing with complex chronic pain conditions, medication alone may not have the best results. Dealing with chronic pain can cause feelings of depression, anxiety and despair – feelings that only further aggravate occurrences of pain. Through TAPMI's multidisciplinary approach to pain management, patients are educated on a variety of tools they can use to manage their pain.

“The TAPMI team works diligently and seamlessly to

enhance the patient experience, incorporating evidence-based knowledge with pragmatic life solutions to educate patients on how to manage their pain at multiple levels using a variety of tools and techniques,” says Hari Gopalakrishnan Nair, a physiotherapist at TAPMI. “With these tools, patients begin to realize that their pain is actually something they have control over.”

This was a realization that was particularly helpful to Rosalind. “After going through the Pain U program, my outlook on my pain really changed. I've developed a new relationship to it and the program has really helped to reduce the despair I was feeling about my pain,” she says. “I feel empowered by the education and tools I received.”

When asked what impact the program has had on her life, Rosalind shared that it has given her hope. “I no longer feel stuck with the pain. Now, I have the confidence to know that I can manage my pain on my own.”

**Your generosity makes it possible for Women's College Hospital to offer innovative programs and services that are streamlining care for patients suffering from chronic pain conditions. If you would like to deepen your support for life-changing initiatives like TAPMI, donate today online at [www.wchf.ca](http://www.wchf.ca) or call 416-323-6323.**



# Hip replacement and home in a day: Kaori's story



*Grateful hip replacement patient Kaori*

**Thanks to the generous support of donors like you, Women's College Hospital is offering an innovative new outpatient total joint replacement surgery, allowing patients like Kaori to return home just hours after undergoing surgery.**

Born with congenital hip dysplasia, Kaori was always aware that she may face painful mobility issues later in life. She remained active in an attempt to keep herself mobile and manage her condition until she experienced a pain in her hip that she had never felt before.

"I'll never forget the sound my hip made that day while I was on a run. It was a huge crack!" says Kaori. "I immediately knew I had done something wrong."

Following her injury, Kaori visited a number of specialists and attempted various treatment options before finally receiving a referral for a total hip replacement.

As an active individual with a strong support network, Kaori was the ideal candidate for the same-day surgery at Women's College Hospital. Revolutionary anesthesia techniques that reduce nausea commonly associated with surgery and an innovative, take-home virtual care application allowed her to leave the hospital just hours after surgery, while remaining fully connected to her care team from the comfort of home.

For Kaori, finally undergoing surgery to correct her hip has meant a dramatic improvement in her quality of life. "For the last several years, I was doing everything with pain. Now, I'm back to work and life and feeling so much better."

**To support the outpatient joint replacement program at Women's College Hospital and other revolutionary advances in healthcare, visit [www.wchf.ca](http://www.wchf.ca) or call us at 416-323-6323.**

## Q&A: *Up close and personal with...* **Dr. Tania Di Renna**

Dr. Tania Di Renna is an anesthesiologist and the medical director of the Toronto Academic Pain Management Institute (TAPMI). We sat down with Dr. Di Renna, an expert in pain management, to learn more about chronic pain and how TAPMI is revolutionizing chronic pain care.



*Dr. Tania Di Renna*

### **What is the difference between acute pain and chronic pain?**

In its natural state, pain is an alarm bell telling us that we are in danger. Let's say a fire starts in your kitchen. The fire alarm bell will go off to alert you to the potential danger and take action. Acute pain is like a fire alarm bell, alerting you to potential danger. However, chronic pain, defined as pain that lasts beyond the usual course of an injury, is like a broken fire alarm bell that keeps ringing even when there is no fire. In this case, the pain has actually become the disease and needs to be managed as a chronic condition versus treated like an acute pain problem.

### **What do you wish more people understood about chronic pain management?**

There is no cure for chronic pain. The most effective treatment involves self-management through lifestyle changes, exercise and education. These approaches address the emotional aspects of chronic pain that are often overlooked.

Our pain signals are carried to the brain via the spinal cord. Once in the brain, pain messages will be sent to areas of the brain that are responsible for memory, focus and emotions, including fear and anxiety. Naturally, we must fear pain to survive as a species, but in the chronic pain state this connection between fear, anxiety and pain creates significant barriers to pain management. When we are able to teach our patients about reducing the fear and anxiety associated with their pain, we're able to better manage the despair that is often associated with it, thus breaking that vicious cycle between pain and anxiety and ultimately improving their experience of pain.

### **How is TAPMI revolutionizing chronic pain care?**

The TAPMI hub at Women's College Hospital is managing the central referral process to ensure patients get to the right healthcare practitioner the first time. We're proud to be offering a variety of interdisciplinary treatment options that address each of the biopsychosocial aspects of pain management required to help patients thrive.

**Thank you, Dr. Di Renna!**

# Grateful patient pays it forward

For WCH patient Lynn, supporting the innovative work of Women's College Hospital is a meaningful way to say thank you for the compassionate care she received at the Centre for Headache.

Bouncing from specialist to specialist, Lynn spent years battling crippling headaches with ineffective medication before finally being referred to Dr. Suvendrini Lena, a neurologist at the Centre for Headache at Women's College Hospital. Under Dr. Lena's expert care, Lynn discovered that the medication she was taking was not only ineffective for her headaches, but was also preventing her from discovering their underlying cause.

"Dr. Lena took the time to work with me to slowly reduce my medication in order to fully understand what was causing my headaches," shares Lynn. "She really took the time to listen to my symptoms."

After just a few visits, Dr. Lena was able to discern the underlying cause of Lynn's headaches: a pressure imbalance caused by excess spinal fluid. After undergoing a spinal tap to relieve some of the excess pressure in her system, Lynn's headaches have dramatically improved.

Finally having her health back inspired Lynn to support Women's College Hospital by making an annual donation in support of the hospital's greatest needs. "It meant so much to me that Dr. Lena took the time to really listen," reflects Lynn. "It has meant everything to me to finally feel better so supporting Women's College Hospital is my way of saying thank you."

**You can join Lynn by supporting Women's College Hospital with a special gift today. To donate, please visit [www.wchf.ca](http://www.wchf.ca) or call 416-323-6323.**



*WCH patient and donor Lynn*

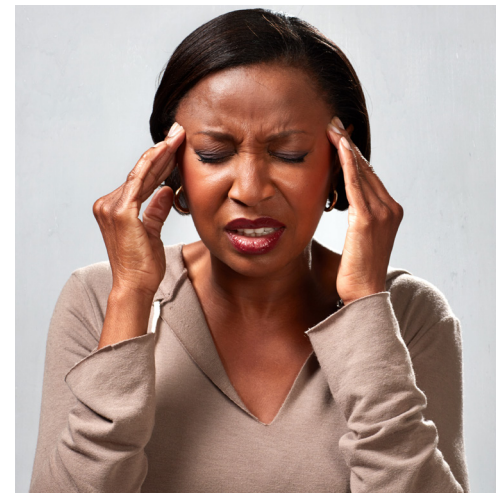
## Leading the way: The Centre for Headache

Approximately 8% of Canadians suffer from migraines, with countless more experiencing regular headaches spurred on by a wide range of physiological, psychological or environmental factors. Regular migraines and headaches can take a significant toll on an individual's work, home life and overall sense of well-being. Women are three times more likely than men to experience migraines.

When it comes to headaches and migraines, **Women's College Hospital's Centre for Headache** is leading the way in helping patients take back their lives. The first clinic of its kind at an Ontario teaching hospital, the Centre provides expert evaluation and individualized treatment plans for people living with migraine and headache disorders. Program staff also host regular educational seminars to help migraine and headache sufferers learn more about common triggers and management strategies.

The Centre for Headache is led by Dr. Christine Lay, an internationally recognized headache expert and one of a very few neurologists in Canada with United Council of Neurologic Subspecialties board certification in Headache Medicine.

**Your generosity helps advance the work of innovative programs like the Centre for Headache. Thank you!**



# Learn more about the **Toronto Academic Pain Management Institute**

Despite the fact that nearly one in five Canadians over the age of 18 lives with chronic pain, studies show that pain is poorly managed within the healthcare system.

Many patients find themselves without a specialist to manage their pain, and pay out of pocket for services in the community such as chiropractors, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and more. This poses a significant burden of care on the patients themselves and also creates added costs for the health system as patients continue to seek specialty care from several places for their chronic condition.

Led by Women's College Hospital, the Toronto Academic Pain Management Institute (TAPMI) is an innovative initiative that allows patients to access a multidisciplinary team of specialists at one of five partner hospitals in Toronto.



TAPMI's goal is to create a seamless patient experience by offering central intake and triage ensuring that the patients get to the right providers for their specific chronic pain condition. TAPMI is a hub for chronic pain-related education and research initiatives and is the only program of its kind in the Greater Toronto Area.

Individuals who are interested in being referred to TAPMI can visit the

program website at [www.tapmipain.ca](http://www.tapmipain.ca) to learn more and complete a self-assessment about their pain. Designed to help triage those who would like to access services at the Institute, the self-assessment generates a helpful report to assist patients with initiating a conversation with their primary care provider about their chronic pain.

## TAPMI goes mobile

In Canada, current wait times to see pain specialists can stretch to over a year. To tackle this challenge, TAPMI is launching a new mobile clinic program that connects chronic pain specialists and interdisciplinary health professionals with family physicians and patients right in their own communities. The goal of the mobile clinic is to educate family doctors on how to help their patients manage chronic pain, eliminating the need for many patients to wait for specialist care.

**Your generosity makes it possible for Women's College Hospital to launch innovative new programs like TAPMI's mobile clinic. If you would like to deepen your support for this and other revolutionary initiatives at WCH, visit [www.wchf.ca](http://www.wchf.ca) or call 416-323-6323 to donate today.**



## Quiz: Understanding chronic pain

There are a lot of misconceptions out there about chronic pain. Try this **fact or fiction** quiz to test your knowledge. Find the correct answers on the back page!

1. Chronic pain can indicate the presence of a serious or ongoing health problem. ☐ FACT ☐ FICTION
2. The right medication can cure chronic pain. ☐ FACT ☐ FICTION
3. If I exercise with chronic pain I will do more damage. ☐ FACT ☐ FICTION



# Welcoming Heather McPherson

On April 1, the Women's College Hospital community was delighted to welcome Heather McPherson as its new president & CEO following the retirement of long-time leader Marilyn Emery.

As Women's College Hospital's former executive vice-president of patient care and ambulatory innovation, Heather has deep roots at the hospital and a proven track record of achievement.

Over the past five years, Heather has led some of Women's College Hospital's most transformative and challenging initiatives, including the operationalization of the new hospital building, the implementation of an electronic health record and the evolution of the Acute Ambulatory Care Unit (AACU), to name just a few. She is a registered occupational therapist, holds a Master of Science degree from the University of Toronto, and is an adjunct lecturer in the Department of Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy at the Faculty of Medicine within the University of Toronto.

"Leading Women's College Hospital is an inspiring and challenging responsibility," says Heather. "It is a promise of partnership to our diverse and changing communities of patients, to science and discovery, to our health system and to training the healthcare leaders of the future. I look forward to building on Marilyn's legacy and advancing our role as a world leader in the health of women, health equity and health system solutions."



Heather McPherson

We look forward to sharing Heather's vision for Women's College Hospital with our donor community over the coming months as we share how WCH is impacting, improving and saving lives. Please join us in welcoming Heather to her new role!

## Fact or fiction? Check your answers from our chronic pain quiz!

- 1. Fiction.** Most chronic pain is a disorder of the nerves that sense pain. In chronic pain, the nerves remain active or hyper-active even though the initial injury or illness may have healed. Chronic pain is also sometimes caused by long-term medical conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis.
- 2. Fiction.** There is no magic pill or cure for chronic pain. The goal of chronic pain treatment is to improve your ability to function and manage your pain.
- 3. Fiction.** Staying active can actually help you manage your chronic pain. A regular exercise program that includes aerobic, strengthening and flexibility exercises will stimulate the release of feel good hormones and increase your ability to participate in activities.

## Donate today! Giving is easy:

- Call the Foundation at 416-323-6323.
- Visit [www.wchf.ca](http://www.wchf.ca) and click on Ways to Give or Donate.
- Visit us on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Women's College Hospital (76 Grenville St., Toronto).

### We love hearing from you!

If you have any feedback about this issue of Heart & Soul, questions about donating or simply want to connect with a member of your Foundation staff team, please contact Alex Cheesman at [alex.cheesman@wchospital.ca](mailto:alex.cheesman@wchospital.ca) or 416-323-6323 ext. 2319.

### Let's stay in touch!

- Follow us on Twitter @wchf, Instagram @wchf and Facebook at [facebook.com/wchfdn](https://facebook.com/wchfdn).
- Sign up for regular e-news updates by emailing [foundation@wchospital.ca](mailto:foundation@wchospital.ca).

## Thank you for your support!

WCHF is fully accredited under Imagine Canada's Standards Program. The Standards Program awards accreditation to charities and nonprofits that demonstrate excellence in five areas of operations: board governance, financial accountability, fundraising, staff management, and volunteer involvement.



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