



Inclusive Communities for Older Immigrants (ICOI) Partnership

Developing multi-level, multi-component interventions to reduce social isolation and promote connectedness among older immigrants in Canada



Greetings

Dear ICOI team members:

We hope that this year has been off to a great start!

The ICOI project team has been busy with various project activities, and this newsletter includes information about their progress.

As in past ICOI newsletters, this issue introduces more team members. We hope you will enjoy reading their bios.

It also includes an update on the Phase 2 REB protocol and the summit that took place in March.

We thank you for your support and look forward to working together as the project progresses.

Warmest regards,
Sepali Guruge, ICOI Project Director
Kaveenaa Chandrasekaran, ICOI Project Manager

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Introducing ICOI Team Members



Jun Li, Research Assistant & Coordinator, AB Team

Jun Li is a dedicated social work professional who has been an immigrant in Canada for more than 20 years. During her Bachelor of Social Work studies, she took on diverse roles in the field, including Mental Health Community Educator, Family Violence Outreach Worker, and Pre-Job Trainer for an emotional support hotline. Since 2022, Jun has been a research assistant for the ICOI project. With expertise in outreach, client advocacy, group facilitation, and administrative coordination, Jun is passionate about promoting social justice, enhancing the mental health of immigrants, and fostering community connections to combat social isolation.



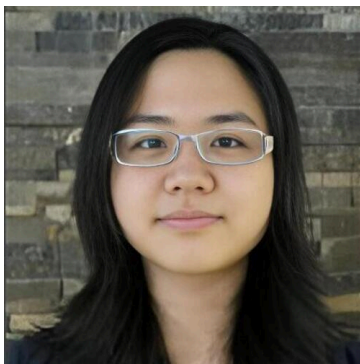
Kevin Sequeira, Provincial Coordinator, ON Team

Kevin is an experienced registered nurse and clinical educator with expertise in pediatric and cardiac critical care. They hold a Bachelor of Science in Nursing with a Minor in Psychology from Toronto Metropolitan University. Kevin is currently pursuing a Master of Nursing degree and certification as a Nurse Practitioner with an anticipated completion date in 2027. Their clinical career spans more than 15 years, with practice experience in leading academic hospitals including The Hospital for Sick Children, Seattle Children's Hospital, and Mount Sinai Hospital.



Lilly Lecanu-Fayet, Provincial Coordinator, BC Team

Lilly is a Master of Science student at University of Victoria, where her research focuses on wildlife monitoring and knowledge integration in corridor mapping. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Geography from McGill University. Before beginning her graduate studies, Lilly worked as a care aid for older adults, where she developed a deep awareness of the social isolation faced by many in aging communities. She joined the ICOI project in early 2025 to stay engaged in efforts to reduce the impact of social isolation among older immigrants, aligning with her commitment to community-engaged research.



Lingqian Li, Postdoctoral Fellow

Lingqian Li completed her PhD in Psychological Science at Toronto Metropolitan University in 2021. Her research focuses on cognitive aging, with a particular emphasis on improving associative memory performance in healthy older adults. Her dissertation explored innovative strategies to enhance memory function in aging populations across Canada. Currently, she teaches statistics to undergraduate students in the Psychology Department at Toronto Metropolitan University. Lingqian is also collaborating with Dr. Lixia Yang on an active aging program aimed at promoting healthy lifestyles among Chinese and Canadian older adults.

2025 ICOI Summit

The 2025 ICOI Summit took place from March 27 to 28 at the SHERPA University Institute in Montreal, Quebec, bringing together project team members to connect, collaborate, and plan the next phase of the initiative. The summit began with a welcome dinner on the evening of March 26, providing a warm and informal setting for team members, some of whom had only met virtually until then, to build connections and engage in cross-site conversations.

The summit convened a diverse group of team members, including academic researchers, community partners, students, and research assistants, who joined in-person and virtually. Together, they shared updates on site-specific activities, reflected on lessons learned from Phase 1 of the ICOI project, and engaged in strategic planning for the work ahead.

We are grateful to Professor Jill Hanley, Quebec Site Lead and Social Inclusion Stream Lead, for her leadership in organizing and hosting the event. Her support was instrumental in creating a welcoming, well-organized, and thoughtful space for the ICOI summit in Montreal.

Over the course of the summit, attendees participated in a variety of sessions that highlighted key findings from Phase 1, explored collaborative opportunities for data analysis and publication, and discussed the upcoming intervention phase of the project. The event also included dedicated time to hear from research assistants and students, whose on-the-ground experiences offered valuable perspectives, as well as presentations from local community partners who are deeply engaged in the work in Montreal.



Research Stream Planning



Research Assistant Presentations



Team Dinner

ICOI Activities: Progress to Date

Phase 2 REB Protocol

In January 2025, we received approval for Phase 2 of the ICOI project from Toronto Metropolitan University's Research Ethics Board. Since then, seven additional academic partner institutions have granted ethics approval, and we are currently awaiting approval from the remaining academic institutions.

While we wait for final research ethics approvals, we are actively working on hiring research assistants who are interested in participating in data collection. Our goal is to hire three research assistants per language group in each participating city to help accelerate recruitment and data collection efforts.

We will be conducting a series of virtual training sessions for our research assistants, which will cover key topics, such as the study protocol, participant recruitment strategies, informed consent procedures, and data collection tools.

Team Member Highlights



Congratulations to Daljit Kaur, our community partners from DIVERSEcity in British Columbia, who was recently honored with the Heart of DIVERSEcity award for her dedicated work as a Community Worker and Program Coordinator. In this role, she supports low-income, vulnerable seniors by providing a wide range of non-medical services designed to promote independence, dignity, and well-being. Her responsibilities include coordinating transportation to medical appointments, arranging housekeeping and yard work, and organizing grocery shopping and delivery. She also connects older adults with vital resources, offers personalized referrals based on individual needs, and collaborates closely with Fraser Health and other community partners to ensure timely, holistic support. Her work has a meaningful impact on helping reduce isolation, enhance quality of life, and empower older adults to remain safely in their homes while staying engaged with their community.

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Inside the Next Issue

The next ICOI newsletter will introduce more ICOI team members, share news about Phase 2, and provide further project activity updates.



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The Inclusive Communities for Older Immigrants
is a 8-year Partnership.

Please share this newsletter with
your networks

Management/Editorial Team

Sepali Guruge, Project Director

Kaveenaa Chandrasekaran, Project Manager