



An E-Newsletter about the Positive Brain Health Now cohort study

Welcome to the summer (winter for Australia ☺) edition of our +BHN Newsletter!

Our team has been very busy over the last months finalizing all the details to begin recruitment and enrollment of study participants, at all participating sites across Canada. Recruitment has been going well at our first site, the Montreal Chest Institute.

Here's a list of what we have accomplished lately, as well as the 'next steps' for the coming months:

+BHN in the news....

1 The on-line French Canadian magazine Seronet, wrote about our study in their January, 2014 issue:

<http://www.seronet.info/article/Le-VIH-un-ennemi-silencieux-de-la-santé-du-cerveau-65259>



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...You asked for it and we heard you!

What's your name again?
When is my appointment?
Did I turn off the stove?
Where did I put my keys again?
Can you repeat what you just said please?
Did I see my alarm?

People living with HIV often express that they are concerned about the way they think, feel, or function in everyday life.

To understand the effects of HIV on cognitive and mental functioning, we have developed a short survey that will take you about 10-15 minutes to complete.

WE ARE INTERESTED IN HEARING FROM YOU!
Please visit the following address to complete the survey:
<http://goo.gl/V8737U>

Confidentiality is important to us. This survey does not ask for any information that will allow for you to be identified. We do not obtain information that can be linked to you (name, email, computer address).

For more information please contact Positive Brain Health Now research group:
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The French language magazine, Remaides, featured our on-line study survey about brain health in people living with HIV in its spring 2014 issue (page 34):

http://www.cocqsidea.com/assets/files/mediatheque/remaides-pdf/remaides87_qc18_web.pdf

In order to introduce our research to the community, Remaides will dedicate a whole section in their summer 2014 issue to the Positive Brain Health Now project.



Key updates



The +BHN study now has a fully functional web-based data-capturing platform

It will allow site Research Coordinators to capture and record the information included in the medical charts, Case Report Forms (CRF's) and questionnaires, which leads to more efficiency and less waste of paper! Special thanks to the data management team for the hard work in developing the platform!



Initiation visit to the Special Immunology Services (SIS) Clinic

Last May 29th, the +BHN team visited the Special Immunology Services (SIS) clinic in Hamilton, Ontario. We had the opportunity to meet with the clinic staff, including Dr. Fiona Smail, Principal Investigator and Laura Puri, site study coordinator. We discussed the implementation of the study. We expect recruitment to start within the next few days at this site. Big thanks to the SIS team for their warm welcome!



Training at SIS clinic, Hamilton, ON, on May 29th, 2014: Left: Laura Puri, +BHN Hamilton Study Coordinator, right: Diana Salazar, National +BHN Study Manager.



Key updates

New faces joining the computerized cognitive training sub-study

Ana Fernandez, PhD candidate in Neurosciences (left) and Christine Déry (right), Laboratory Coordinator for Dr. Lesley Fellows, have recently joined Dr. Fellows' team and will be in charge of the implementation of the cognitive training sub-study. They will work closely with Dr. Etienne De Villers-Sidani, one of the team's experts in neuroplasticity. They have recently started piloting the computerized cognitive training. They will ultimately test whether it can improve cognitive function

in a sub-study involving 60 HIV+ participants with cognitive concerns, drawn from the main +BHN study cohort. Welcome aboard Ana and Christine! We wish you the best of luck with the development of the project!



New +BHN sub-study on sleep disturbances in people living with HIV, in collaboration with Dr. Thanh Dang Vu

Insomnia is a common complaint in people living with HIV. Sleep disturbances are reported at all stages of HIV infection, but seem to be more common in the presence of cognitive impairment. Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy for Insomnia (CBT), is a proven method for treating insomnia without the use of sleeping pills. CBT is aimed at changing sleep habits, as well as addressing misconceptions about sleep and insomnia, that perpetuate sleep difficulties.

The treatment of insomnia with CBT and its effects on cognitive functions in HIV remain to be further investigated.

Dr. Dang Vu, a neurologist and researcher at Montreal's Concordia University, plans to test an on-line CBT programme to overcome insomnia in 60 HIV+ participants with cognitive concerns, drawn from the main +BHN study cohort.

We will keep you posted on the development of this sub-study!

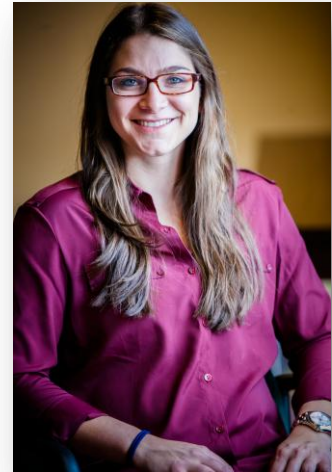




Key updates

Self-Management sub-study content in development

At the moment, there are no established interventions for treating mild cognitive impairment in HIV infected individuals. Self-management of symptoms and associated functional impact is one promising strategy. While there are a number of self-management programs developed for chronic disease, including HIV, there are no self-management interventions targeting brain health in people living with HIV. The purpose of the self-management sub-study, led by Dr. Susan Bartlett, is to develop and test a self-management program that will address cognitive difficulties that HIV patients commonly experience. This program will be web-based and consist of video segments, text and interactive self-assessment modules. The program is currently being developed by Alicia Rosenzweig, BSc in neuroscience (photo).



As of June 2014, the Montreal Chest Institute has enrolled 85 patients in the study. Of these, 67 participants have had their Baseline visit. Second study visits will start to take place at the beginning of July 2014.

We are now CTN-273. The Canadian HIV Trials Network (CTN) has become a financial supporter of the +BHN study.

Maple Leaf Medical Clinic in Ontario, Canada, has joined the +BHN study as an investigative site.

Dr. Graham Smith will be the Principal Investigator at this site. We expect to start recruitment and enrollment at this site in the fall or winter of 2014.



- The study initiation visit at Clinique médicale l'Actuel will be held at the end of July 2014. Recruitment and enrolment will start shortly after.
- Contract completion and ethics submission for Maple Leaf Medical Clinic in Toronto and St-Paul's Clinic in Vancouver are in process. Initiation visits to these sites will take place before the fall/spring season, 2014.

**The +BHN team wishes you a happy summer/winter season!
We'll be back in the fall/spring 2014!**

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Dr. Marie-Josée Brouillette (marie-josée.brouillette@mcgill.ca) or Dr. Lesley Fellows (Lesley.fellows@mcgill.ca). For any questions on regulatory, contracts, study procedures or communications please contact: Diana Salazar (Study Coordinator); Phone: 514-9341934; E-mail: diana.salazarospina@mcgill.ca or connect with us online.



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