



The
MATCH Study
Mindfulness And TaiChi for Cancer Health

MATCH Study Newsletter November 2018 | Issue 2

WHY AM I GETTING THIS NEWSLETTER?

You are receiving this newsletter because you are either a MATCH study participant, or are signed up for updates on our website. To our participants - we would like to thank you for your continued engagement and participation in the MATCH Study! Your dedication to the program and data collection (blood and saliva samples) has a huge impact in helping us better understand the effects of these programs for cancer survivors.

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide you with information on the progress of the MATCH Study, the future direction of MATCH, introduce new team members and share personal experiences from past participants.

We want to hear from YOU!

If you've participated in the MATCH study and would like to share your story, let us know! We will feature participant stories in future newsletters, on our websites and social media. Nothing is more powerful to potential participants, funders and the general public than hearing about your own personal experiences. To submit your experiences, please contact Katherine-Ann Piedalue at Katherine-Ann.Piedalue@albertahealthservices.ca.

For more detailed information about the study, please visit our website
www.thematchstudy.ca



STUDY UPDATES

The MATCH Study: Mindfulness And Tai-chi for Cancer Health

This innovative clinical trial is being conducted by the University of Calgary/Tom Baker Cancer Centre in Calgary and the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre in Toronto.

The MATCH Study started in September 2016 with 33 enrolled participants across both programs (Mindfulness and Tai Chi) in the Calgary division. Each year, the interest rates continue to grow; to date the MATCH study has reached a total of 209 cancer survivors in the Calgary location alone! We are currently on our 7th Cohort with 39 participants enrolled in classes started in Fall 2018.

Meanwhile, in Toronto, the MATCH study has reached 129 cancer survivors, with 49 enrolled to start for their 5th cohort this Fall!

Thanks to your involvement in the study, we are on track to reach our goal of 600 participants across both Calgary and Toronto locations. We are still enrolling participants until we reach this goal.

This study will be the largest ever conducted on mindfulness meditation and tai chi/qigong, and aims to answer the research question: Which therapy works best for whom and for treating which symptoms?



MEET THE TEAM

Dr. Linda Carlson, Ph.D. , R.Psych

Dr. Linda Carlson is the Principal Investigator for the MATCH study. She holds the Enbridge Research Chair in Psychosocial Oncology, and is Full Professor in Psychosocial Oncology in the Department of Oncology and Cumming School of Medicine at the University of Calgary. She is the Director of Research and works as a Clinical Psychologist at the Department of Psychosocial Resources at the Tom Baker Cancer Centre.

Dr. Carlson is an international leader in Psychosocial Oncology research and has helped advance the field of research in Mindfulness-Based Cancer Recovery and mind-body therapies. Dr. Carlson and her team have published work in over 165 research papers and book chapters in the area of psycho-oncology. She has also published both a patient and professional training manual, has been awarded many national and international research awards, holds several millions of dollars in grant funding and is regularly invited to present her work at conferences internationally.

Dr. Carlson is also one of the three mindfulness instructors for the MATCH study in Calgary, and coordinates the program curriculum with our three instructors in Toronto.



MEET THE TEAM

Dr. Devesh Oberoi, Ph.D. , MBBS



**Study Coordinator,
Calgary**

Dr. Devesh Oberoi is a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Calgary. He obtained his medical degree from Manipal University, India and his doctoral degree from Curtin University, Australia. Prior to taking over the MATCH study as the Study coordinator, he was a postdoctoral fellow at the Center for Behavioral Research in Cancer, Cancer Council Victoria, Melbourne, Australia.

Devesh is a population health researcher, with research interests in and public health. He specializes in mixed-methods research and has been involved in program evaluation of health systems. His international research also includes working on various public health projects in India at INSPIRE, Importance and an editorial internship at The Lancet, UK.

Devesh has published his research in several international journals and has presented in various national and international conferences.

Devesh is currently enrolled in our Wednesday morning Mindfulness class, so that he can experience the program with our participants, whilst simultaneously running the program. He is an ardent practitioner and supporter of mindfulness-based cancer interventions. Devesh aims to use his expertise in psychosocial oncology research and his experience in program management to promote active participation of cancer patients, the ultimate beneficiaries of our program, in the MATCH study.

Steven Guirguis is the MATCH study coordinator at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre in Toronto. Steven received his Honors Bachelor Degree in Psychology, Neuroscience and Behaviour from McMaster University and Masters of Kinesiology from Western University. His research focuses on using physical activity to improve cognitive functions and overall wellbeing in various populations including seniors, cancer survivors, children, and smokers. Since starting with MATCH, Steven has come to appreciate the role and benefits of meditation, and is working on incorporating it in his own life.

Steven Guirguis, MA



**Study Coordinator,
Toronto**

TAI CHI AND QIGONG



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Tai chi (pronounced 'tai chee') and qigong (pronounced 'chee kung') are two increasingly popular mind-body exercises that show great promise in addressing a broad range of factors that are central to supportive cancer care. Tai chi and qigong share a common history that integrates elements of traditional Chinese medicine, martial arts conditioning, and Asian lifestyle philosophy. Both incorporate elements of slow gentle movement, breath training, and a number of cognitive skills including heightened body awareness, relaxed but focused mental attention, and imagery. A growing number of studies support that tai chi and qigong positively impact the health and wellbeing of cancer survivors.

Reported benefits experienced by
previous participants:

"...Improved balance and energy"

"...Better sleep"

"...Reduced stress levels"

"...Helped with arthritis"

"[I] would have never considered tai chi before taking the program —it helped open up [my] mind to different types of exercises." - Past participant





MINDFULNESS

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Simply put, mindfulness is learning to be aware in the present moment with a non-judgmental attitude. It's about paying kind attention to your experience as it is unfolding in the moment, with acceptance and ease. There is no rushing, no striving or grasping and no trying to make the experience be something it is not.

HOW CAN MINDFULNESS HELP?

Those who have participated in our mindfulness program have reported feeling less angry, anxious, worried, depressed and stressed out. Others sleep better, have more energy and feel more at peace with their situation.

Participants tell us that facing their problems in meditation practice, with acceptance, allows learning to relate to thoughts and emotions in a different, less reactive, way. Life will unfold around you in unpredictable and often beautiful ways, if you are simply there to allow it.



Ready, set, pose: A snapshot of our Calgary participants putting some mindful-movement in action. Yoga is a regular 6 part of our mindfulness program.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

1. Carlson LE, Zelinski EL, Specia M, Balneaves LG, Jones JM, Santa Mina D, Wayne PM, Campbell TS, Giese-Davis J, Faris P, Zwicker J, Patel K, Beattie TL, Cole S, Toivonen K, Nation J, Peng P, Thong B, Wong R, Vohra S. Protocol for the MATCH study (Mindfulness and Tai Chi for cancer health): A preference-based multi-site randomized comparative effectiveness trial (CET) of Mindfulness-Based Cancer Recovery (MBCR) vs. Tai Chi/Qigong (TCQ) for cancer survivors. *Contemp Clin Trials*. 2017 Aug;59:64-76. doi: 10.1016/j.cct.2017.05.015. Epub 2017 May 30. PMID: 28576734 1.
2. Carlson, L.E., Oberoi, D., Qureshi, M., Subnis, U. (2018). Integrative oncology trials in the real world: accessing the pragmatism of an ongoing integrative oncology trial of mindfulness an tai-chi/qigong. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*.

Want to know more?

If you would like to find out more information regarding The MATCH Study, please visit our website at www.thematchstudy.ca.

To know more about other studies and other projects going on at the Carlson Lab, you can visit us at www.lindacarlson.ca and www.tbccintegrative.com.

