



Senior Research and Evaluation Staff

Robert Schwartz: Principal Investigator and Executive Director



Robert Schwartz became Executive Director of the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit in July 2011. Previously, he was Deputy Director and Director of Evaluation and Monitoring, overseeing a comprehensive evaluation and monitoring program. He is an Associate Professor at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto and holds a faculty association at the university's School of Public Policy and Governance. He is also an External Fellow at York University and an Affiliated Scientist at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. He is Principal Investigator of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research Strategic Training Program in Public Health Policy. He has taught several courses in evaluation, budgeting and performance measurement and analysis and is currently teaching two courses in public health policy.

Dr. Schwartz has extensive training in Public Policy and Administration, Program Evaluation, Public Oversight and State Audit and has a particular interest in the quality of evaluation. As a tenured faculty member at the University of Haifa, he was involved in many international projects, most recently as a Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Consultant for the World Bank. From 1987-97, he worked as an expert in program evaluation in the State Comptroller's Office in Israel. Earlier, he worked at the Brookdale Institute, where he developed a performance monitoring system for the supervision of institutions for the elderly.

Dr. Schwartz has completed studies on smoke-free policies, contraband tobacco policy, youth engagement, cessation, total display bans and cigarillo use. Current research projects examine health insurance coverage policies for cessation, smoke-free homes for asthmatic children, and the use of the cigarette package for advertising. He is the Editor-in-Chief of the Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation.

Roberta Ferrence: Principal Investigator and Deputy Director



Roberta Ferrence is a Senior Scientist with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. She is also a Professor in the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto. She was OTRU's first Executive Director, holding the position from 1993 until July 2011. She is continuing her work at OTRU as Deputy Director.

Dr. Ferrence received her Master's degree in Medical Sociology and PhD in Epidemiology from the University of Western Ontario. She has been involved in tobacco and alcohol research for many years. Her research interests include the epidemiology of tobacco use, the impact of tobacco policy on health, the role of tobacco in mortality and morbidity, and economic factors in smoking behaviour.

Currently, she is involved in research on smoking attitudes and behaviours in general populations, environmental tobacco smoke exposure in public and private environments, and behavioural and economic effects of restrictions on smoking. She is also involved in new initiatives on third hand smoke.

Dr. Ferrence has served on numerous committees and task forces for the National Cancer Institute of Canada, the Canadian Cancer Society, the American Cancer Society, Health Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.



Our Senior Research and Evaluation Team



Dr. Alexey Babayan: Research Associate

Dr. Alexey Babayan is a Research Associate at OTRU. Dr. Babayan has considerable practical and methodological experience in conducting evaluation of tobacco control interventions, particularly in the area of smoking cessation. He has conducted various evaluation studies, including needs assessment, program performance monitoring, formative and outcome evaluation. At OTRU, he leads the evaluation of cessation programming and policy.



Dr. Michael Chaiton: Scientist

Dr. Michael Chaiton is a Scientist at the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit and Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto. He has a PhD in Epidemiology from the University of Toronto. He has been active in tobacco control since 2000 when he started working for Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada and the International Non Governmental Coalition Against Tobacco. He is interested broadly in tobacco research and is the co-instructor of the graduate level course “Tobacco and Health: From Cells to Society”. His main areas of research include unraveling the relationship between depression and smoking in adolescents and understanding the impact of widespread retail availability of tobacco. Michael is Co-Head of the Population Research Initiative in Mental Health and Addictions (PRIMHA) at the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit.



Dr. Pamela Kaufman: Scientist

Dr. Pamela Kaufman is a Scientist with the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit and the Social and Epidemiological Research Department at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, and Assistant Professor in the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto. Pam’s program of research addresses physical and social environment factors that affect the development and implementation of public health policies, and the beneficial effects and unintended consequences of such policies. She has led several studies on smoking behaviour and exposure to smoking in outdoor spaces.



Dr. Sue Keller-Olaman: Research Associate

Dr Sue Keller-Olaman is a Research Associate at the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit, and has an adjunct position in the Department of Health, Aging and Society at McMaster University. She completed her PhD in Psychology and Preventive & Social Medicine at the University of Otago (New Zealand) and a post-doctoral fellowship at McMaster University. Sue has worked as a researcher in oncology and public health settings. Her research areas of interest include: population health, program appraisal, cancer information and support, evidence-based decision making and environment-health relationships. At OTRU, Sue leads evaluation studies in a range of cessation and prevention program and policy areas.



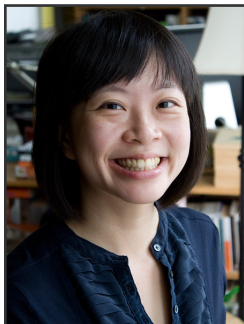
Dr. Maritt Kirst: Research Associate

Dr. Maritt Kirst is a Research Associate and Co-Head of the Population Research Initiative in Mental Health and Addictions (PRIMHA) at the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit. She is also an Assistant Professor in the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto. She received her PhD in Sociology and Addiction Studies from the University of Toronto. Her research interests pertain to tobacco control policy, tobacco use co-morbidities, substance abuse and mental health, social capital, health equity, and the evaluation of complex health interventions. At OTRU, Dr. Kirst leads evaluation studies of policies and programs in the areas of tobacco use prevention and protection against secondhand smoke.

Dr. Shawn O'Connor: Senior Research Associate

Dr. Shawn O'Connor is a recognized expert in the monitoring and surveillance of tobacco control outcomes. He was a founding member of the Canadian Tobacco Control Research Initiative's National Advisory Group on Monitoring and Evaluation and was co-author of CTCRI's Indicators for Monitoring Tobacco Control. Shawn has led the development of OTRU's Tobacco Informatics Monitoring System (TIMS) and its sister site, the Chronic Disease Informatics Monitoring System (CDIMS), innovative web-based data portals designed to enhance the use and adoption of risk-factor indicators by public health stakeholders. Recently, Shawn was a co-investigator on a study exploring tobacco promotions at the point-of-sale. His current research focuses on the cigarette pack as communication vehicle, with an emphasis on design elements that connote perceived strength and lifestyle messaging including gender and luxury.

Applying OTRU's Approach to Other Areas of Public Health



Dr. Catherine Mah: Head and Principal Investigator, Food Policy Research Initiative

Catherine L. Mah, MD, FRCPC, PhD is a Scientist at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Head of the Food Policy Research Initiative at the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit, and an Assistant Professor in the Division of Public Health Policy at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto. She recently held postdoctoral fellowships funded by CIHR and CHSRF, and a visiting fellowship at Kyoto University in Japan. Dr. Mah is leading a new CIHR-funded project on the ethical principles that inform policy debates on food advertising to children and is a co-investigator on a CIHR-funded research program in health and health equity to study policy interventions to address household food insecurity. She is engaged in research partnerships with Toronto Public Health and the Toronto Food

Strategy, and is member of the Toronto Food Policy Council.

Established in 1993 as the research and evaluation component of the Ontario Tobacco Strategy, OTRU is the focal point for a provincial and national tobacco research network that includes eight Principal Investigators and more than 100 Investigators, Affiliates, and Student Members from universities and institutions in Ontario, across Canada and in other countries. OTRU is home to some 30 full-time researchers, including several scientists and research associates at the PhD level.