

Happy 'hood: Happy human?

Douglas holds symposium looking at neighbourhood/mental health connection

Montreal, January 19, 2011 – Is the cliché true? Are people happier in the 'burbs and wealthy communities? This question and others will be addressed at the conference on neighbourhood environment and mental health hosted by the Douglas Mental Health University Institute.

"The aim of this one-day conference is to highlight the latest theories and evidence linking neighbourhood environment to mental health," says Douglas researcher, Norbert Schmitz, Chairman of the conference Organizing Committee.

The speakers and their findings on:

Neighbourhoods and depression

- **Dr. Christina Mair, Prevention Research Center, Berkeley, CA**, will outline the association between neighbourhood characteristics and depressive symptoms.

Neighbourhood poverty and alcohol use

- **Dr. Magdalena Cerda, Center for Urban Epidemiological Studies, The New York Academy of Medicine, NY**, will discuss what current studies tell us about the effect of neighbourhood concentration of poverty on alcohol use and alcohol abuse among adults.

Why does the neighbourhood environment affects mental health?

- **Dr. Terrence Hill, Department of Sociology, Florida State University, FL**, will emphasize the theoretical and empirical explanations for the link between neighbourhood conditions and mental health. We already know that neighbourhood context matters for mental health. The question is, why?

Neighbourhoods and psychotic disorders

- **Dr James Kirkbride, Psychiatry Department, Cambridge University, UK**, will outline the epidemiological evidence which suggests a role for the social environment in psychosis. He proposes that by investigating whether, how, when and which genetic and environmental factors interact, we will greatly increase our chances of eliciting the complex, multifactorial causes of psychosis.

Measuring the neighbourhood environment

- **Dr. Janet A. Parsons, St. Michael's Hospital, Keenan Research Centre, Toronto, Canada**, will discuss how we can measure the neighbourhood environment.

SYMPOSIUM DETAILS

What: *Happy places, happy people* - Conference on neighbourhood environment and mental health

When: Friday January 28, 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Where: Douglas Mental Health University Institute, Bowerman Room, Dobell Pavilion. 6875, Blvd LaSalle

-30-

Information

Marie France Coutu, Communications and Public Affairs
Douglas Mental Health University Institute
Tel.: 514 761-6131, ext. 2769
Cell: 514-835-3236
marie-france.coutu@douglas.mcgill.ca
www.douglas.mcgill.ca

About the Douglas – www.douglas.qc.ca

The Douglas is a world-class institute affiliated with McGill University and the World Health Organization. Its mission is to treat people suffering from mental illness and offer them both hope and healing. The Institute's teams of specialists and researchers continually advance scientific knowledge, integrate it into patient care, and share it with the community to increase awareness and thus eliminate stigma around mental illness.