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**The Montreal WHO/PAHO Collaborating Centre
for Research and Training
in Mental Health**

Douglas Mental Health University Institute

Designated by the

World Health Organization

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INTRODUCTION

This activity report covers the period from October 2008 to October 2010.

For us, one of the highlights of this period was the redesignation of the Montreal Collaborating Centre at the Douglas Mental Health University Institute for another four-year term. Another highlight was in November 2009, when the WHO Collaborating Centre was awarded the Prize for international influence. The Atlas-ID is the sum of more than four years of effort to improve the quality of life of people with intellectual disabilities around the world.

It was also during this period that Dr. Gaston P. Harnois, MD, after nearly 40 years at the Douglas, decided to retire in April 2010. This eminent psychiatrist has been CEO of this institution for 17 years. We owe him, amongst other things, to have established the Montreal WHO/PAHO Collaborating Centre for research and training in mental health in 1982 and to have enabled the creation of the Research Centre. Moreover, his great humanity was an inspiration to many, and one expression of this quality was his ability to be a mentor to many who, under his leadership, were able to spread their wings and reach their professional goals.

It is with great pleasure that I accepted the request from Dr. Harnois and the Douglas Mental Health University Institute, to assume the post of Director of our WHO CC. In addition to my interest in our international collaborations, I will pay particular attention to training and to our ties to McGill University.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Ms. Jane Lalonde, director of the Douglas Foundation, and its president, Ms. Marie Giguère, for their unfailing financial support. We also thank Mr. Jacques Hendlisz, Director General of the Douglas Mental Health Institute and Mr. François Morin, President of the Board of Research Centre for their vision and support.

Marc Laporta, M.D.
Director

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Headquarters, GENEVA

The Montreal WHO / PAHO (World Health Organization / Pan American Health Organization) Collaborating Centre for Research and Training in Mental Health is the first collaborating centre to be appointed by the WHO in Canada in 1982.

While the Montreal CC is part of the Research Center of the Douglas Mental Health University Institute, work and activities of our CC incorporates the expertise of Quebec professionals and academicians beyond the Douglas.

We continue our work in close collaboration with the WHO's Division of Mental Health in Geneva, especially with its director, Dr. Shekhar Saxena. Indeed, after several years as head of this division, Dr Saraceno retired in March 2010 to be replaced by Dr. Saxena. Our other main contact person in this division is Dr Michelle Funk.

In September 2009, Dr. Harnois visited the headquarters as part of an official visit.

In September 2010, the World Health Organization and its regional office for the Americas, the Pan American Health Organization redesignated the Douglas Mental Health University Institute as "WHO/PAHO Collaborating Centre for Research and Training in Mental Health" for a period of four years (2010-2014).

In this section, we describe the main areas where our expertise has been in demand by the WHO headquarters.

Mental Health in the Workplace

As a follow-up on the module, which we wrote for the WHO with Margaret Grigg and Dr Michelle Funk (WHO-Geneva) entitled "Policies and Mental Health Programs in the Workplace", we continue to monitor the international experiences in this field. We focus on the need for data from developing countries, mainly the impact of globalization, changes in standards and practices of employment, unemployment and the role of unions as appropriate.

Our CC has developed expertise in the field of mental health in the workplace and represented the Director of the WHO Division of Mental Health at the International Labour Office (ILO) until 2006. Since then, some activities related to this theme at the WHO have been adopted by the Division of Global Occupational Health. In 2010, we met the director of this organization and intend to maintain a useful communication with her group.

Portugal

In August 2009, Dr. Gaston Harnois acted as keynote speaker at the European Forum of Employee Assistance Programs involving representatives of 17 countries in Europe. He delivered a speech on the theme "The Challenge of Mental Health and its impacts on workers and the labor market: reality and prospects for 2015. "

Quebec

(1) In February 2009, Dr. Harnois was invited to represent the position of the WHO at a meeting with a team from the Quebec Human Rights Tribunal. He delivered a lecture entitled "Mental health problems and their impact." Also present at this conference were the President of the Court of justice, Judge Michèle Rivet; Anne-Marie Laflamme, Professor at the Faculty of Law, Laval University; Mrs. Louise Forest, users representative, and Sylvie Gagnon, lawyer at the Human Rights Tribunal.

(2) At the request of the Ministry of Health of Quebec, we had a meeting in May 2010 with the delegation of the Committee on Social Affairs of the National Assembly of France, which focused on the Québec model of mental health interventions at work to represent the position of the WHO on the subject. On this occasion, Dr Gaston Harnois gave a presentation on psychosocial risks at work.

Integrating Mental Health into Primary Care

The WHO has chosen the theme of primary health care for its World Health Report for 2008.

(1) International Conference "Integrating Mental Health into Primary Care"

Several reports, including the one we wrote in 2005 about the lack of integration of mental health services at primary care level in Mexico, led the Division of Mental Health of WHO to address the issue and to undertake the writing a paper entitled "*Integrating mental health into primary care: a global perspective*" in collaboration with the World Association of Family Doctors (Wonca).

The international conference and the North American launch of the report of the WHO and WONCA held by our collaborating center and held at the Douglas Institute in November 2008 was a resounding success. The conference was attended by Dr. Jorge J. Rodríguez (PAHO), Dr Michelle Funk (Oms), Dr. Gabriel Ivbijaro (WONCA) and Dr. Jean-Luc Roelandt (WHO CC, France) and Dr. André Delorme and others. Subsequently, we received very positive reviews about the content and conduct of this conference from Dr. André Delorme, chief of mental health at the Quebec Ministry of Health.

(2) Quebec

Our Centre was asked to attend the Bi-annual mental health Days in May 2009, organized by the Ministry of Health and focusing on the role of primary care in mental health. Dr. Harnois presented on this occasion the "Perspectives of the WHO on the integration of mental health at the primary health care level." The conference attracted 200 guests and participants.
http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/sujets/prob_sante/sante_mentale/index.php?aid=99

Policies and Mental Health Systems

In recent years, our collaborating center has developed expertise on the processes involved in the drafting and implementation of policies in mental health. As a result, and at the

request of the Division of Mental Health in Geneva, our CC has formalized its expertise in this field.

Our intention is to integrate, for countries we will collaborate with, epidemiological data, organizational data, and assessments of health services, to build a mental health policy that is relevant. Dr. Laporta is responsible for developing this line of expertise.

Our work in this area during this period, is described below (*WHO>AMRO>OPS>section (5)*)

Disasters and Emergencies

(1) Following the tsunami in Aceh in Indonesia, our CC was called upon for training with the primary healthcare authorities in Jakarta and Aceh. Since that mission, we have been developing our expertise in this field.

(2) Most of our work in this period took place in the Caribbean (See → *WHO> AMRO> OPS> items (6) and (7)*).

WHO Regional Offices

Regional Office for the Americas: Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)

We maintain close links with our Regional Office and with the responsible person for mental health programs, Dr. Jorge Rodríguez, Chief of PAHO Regional Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Rehabilitation Unit, Washington, DC.

(1) Participation in major policy documents

(A) "PAHO Regional Mental Health Strategy and Plan of Action"

At the request of PAHO, our CC revised this PAHO document on mental health.

<http://new.paho.org/hq/dmdocuments/2009/CD49-10-e.pdf>

(B) "Policy on Research for Health"

Also, always at the request of PAHO, we have contributed to this report. For further info:

<http://new.paho.org/hq/dmdocuments/2009/CD49-10-e.pdf>

(C) Barbados

In March 2010, Dr. Laporta went on an official mission to the sub-regional office of PAHO in Barbados to attend the meeting on mental health in emergencies and disasters.

In this context, he was invited to join a study group on emergencies and disasters in the subregion. The task force is currently finalizing a formal document on the subject for stakeholders in those countries.

(2) Meeting of the Canadian Collaborating Centres

In October 2009 a meeting of Collaborating Centres of Canada was held in Ottawa. Dr. Laporta, representing the WHO Collaborating Centre in Montreal, went to this first meeting of the Canadian Collaborating Centres.

During this meeting, the following points were agreed to by all members:

- It is necessary to optimize the functionality of the PAHO-Canada Portal for CCs, including the creation of a service and a network database for Canadian expertise in health and use of virtual rooms for meetings.
- Priority areas for collaboration and potential projects for the period 2010-2011 must be identified.
- Meetings between collaborating centers should be held regularly.
- Information on sources of funding should be available to all collaborating centers.

(3) Caribbean → Dominica : Mental Health Policy

Dominica represents a model of mental health intervention for developing countries. The government shows a clear interest in developing mental health care.

We have been interested in mental health programs in this country for over 14 years. In May 2009, following a submission (Canada-PAHO Biennial Work Plan) on a collaboration to develop a mental health policy for this country by Dr. Laporta, we received funding from Health Canada.

During a week-long survey mission, a team from our collaborating centre, including Dr. Laporta, Dr. Ian Bradley, from the Department of Psychology at McGill University and Anton Parker, a 3rd year medical student, McGill University, visited Dominica. They met government officials, including Permanent Secretary and the Minister of Health as well as the Minister for Youth Affairs of Dominica. They also conducted six focus groups composed of about 10 people each representing various aspects of the Dominican society (employers, clinicians, academics and school, legislators, religious people, ministry), including people with mental health problems, persons at risk, care providers, health practitioners and community organizers, and so on, to perform in-depth interviews. These discussions served to highlight the country's needs and resources in mental health, and to identify some values and goals of the population in regard to mental health.

These results were used to formulate our recommendations. The first detailed draft of the mental health policy, which was discussed during a second trip with a group of country experts, led to the final draft of mental health policy for this country.

In 2011, efforts for Dominica will focus on parliament's acceptance of mental health policy.

See also → <http://www.douglas.qc.ca/page/who-collaborating-centre-initiatives>

(4) Caribbean → Integrating Mental Health into Primary Care

As part of a sub-regional collaboration for the training of primary caregivers, our collaborating centre has submitted an application for funding to Health Canada, which has been accepted and will be financed from the end of 2010. The project aims to use novel solutions to the problem of non-integration of mental health care despite training opportunities and better knowledge.

Dr. Laporta is following this dossier with Dominica and Belize, PAHO, and with the Subregional Office in Barbados.

(5) Caribbean → Haiti-Mental Health in Disaster Situations

Dr. Laporta was invited by Dr. Jorge Rodríguez at PAHO to travel to Haiti as an expert consultant, following the earthquake of January 2010, to report on resources and needs in mental health. He thus co-authored, with Devora Kestel of PAHO, the mission report which was presented to PAHO.

The report served to guide PAHO's plan to help this country in the field of mental health.

Following the recommendations of this report, PAHO appointed a new representative for Mental Health in Haiti, Ms. Zohra Abaakouk, with whom our collaborating centre maintains ongoing ties.

(6) Jamaica - Research Capacitation

Since our collaborating centre began to establish links with the department of psychiatry at the University of the West Indies (UWI), several collaborations have developed. One was that of a resident in psychiatry at McGill University, Dr. Lorin Young, who spent several weeks in training at the site. She was particularly interested in the effects of violence on the development of children and adolescents. A summary of her experiences is on the following site: [www.douglas.qc.ca / page / center-WHO-Collaborating initiative](http://www.douglas.qc.ca/page/center-WHO-Collaborating-initiative)

Meetings between Dr. Laporta and Dr. Wendel Abel, Director of the Department of Psychiatry at the UWI should result in future collaborations as well.

(7) Central America → Belize

(A) Mental Health in Natural Disasters

Belize has a population 300,000 people and mental health issues have been taken in hand, over the last ten years, mainly by the psychiatrist Dr. Claudina Cayetano. At the request of the Ministry of Health of Belize, a group of experts from our collaborating visited Belize in July 2010. The goal was to train stakeholders across the country in mental health interventions in situations of natural disasters. A two-day workshop was led by Dr. Laporta, Dr. Mark Yaffe, a family physician at St. Mary's Hospital and Julian Xue, a 3rd year medical student at McGill University, in close collaboration with Dr. Cayetano and the Ministry of Health. The training, which included aspects from the organization of services to practical interventions, was a resounding success.

(B) Other collaborations

Our collaboration with this country is also reflected by the invitation of Dr. Carole Brebion by the National Association of Mental Health of Belize for their annual meeting. Dr. Brebion is a psychiatrist at the Lakeshore Hospital, which has an affiliation to McGill University.

[www.douglas.qc.ca / page / center-WHO-Collaborating Testimonials](http://www.douglas.qc.ca/page/center-WHO-Collaborating-Testimonials)

Finally, we involve students and residents from the faculty of medicine and psychiatry at McGill University in exchange programs with countries we collaborate with. So far, Dr. Julian Xue has participated twice in the program. Dr. Ammar El-Banna has submitted a project and Dr. Alexandra Baines takes part in the training project in mental health care into primary care. Dr. Julian Xue reported on some of his experiences available at:

<http://www.douglas.qc.ca/news/685>

(8) Guatemala

Our work continues, especially in the Quiche region, which is mostly Mayan, where we have worked with the group *Médicos Descalzos* directed by Cristina Chavez. We have supported concrete efforts in this important NGO to develop aid programs, especially in mental health for the indigenous population of the town of Chinique and its surroundings.

Regional Office for Europe - (EURO)

(1) The WHO Collaborating Centre of Lille (France)

In collaboration with the Quebec Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation, we supported the visit to and the training of a group of peer helpers at the WHO CC of France in Lille. This exchange has generated considerable interest and a request to do the same training in Liège.

In addition, we continue our discussions with France on the participation and role of elected officials in mental health programs, especially at the level of support mechanisms for people with serious mental health problems when they are fully integrated as citizens.

(2) Catalonia

In 2010, our CC was awarded a grant from the Department of International Relations of Quebec to undertake a comparative study of mental health in workplaces in Quebec and Catalonia. This project will end in 2011. It is an international comparative study on how two companies, each with more than 1,000 employees, manage mental health problems of their own employees. The Douglas has been chosen as a partner in Quebec, the principal investigator is Dr. Harnois assisted by Michelle Gilbert, director of human resources, and Caroline Dubé, Manager, Health and Safety. Our Catalan partner is the *Intitut of Assistència Sanitària* Girona. The principal investigator is Professor Luis Salvador assisted by Dr. Jordi Cid, Head of mental health in Girona.

(3) Germany - Mental Health and Work

Dr. Harnois met with the director of the Lebenswelten agency in Berlin in May 2009. We have found that social enterprises in Europe continue to grow at an interesting rate. One of the ideas of the Lebenswelten to build a hotel of about 400 rooms in Berlin which would be managed by a social enterprise where mental health service users would represent the majority, deserves to be carefully studied.

(4) Sweden - Mental Health and Work

It is with pleasure that we responded to the request of Professor Lennart Levi, Professor Emeritus at the Karolinska Institute and member of the Swedish parliament, to describe the Canadian mental health programs in employment. Professor Lennart intends to submit a bill to create a parliamentary committee that would aim to improve mental health in employment contexts.

Regional Office South-East Asia (SEARO)

(1) Bangkok - Intellectual Disability

In November 2007, the WHO presented its report *Atlas of Global Resources for Persons with Intellectual disabilities*. This document was supported by our collaborating center.
http://new.paho.org/hq/dmdocuments/2008/MH_December_2007.pdf

Following this report, we agreed to continue our collaboration with the Institute Rajanukul Bangkok, led by Professor Panpimol Lotrakul. It was in Bangkok where the document had been launched.

(2) India

(A) Work and Mental Health

In November 2009 we attended the 10th World Congress of the World Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation, in Bangalore, India. As Chair of the Committee on Work and Mental Health, Dr. Harnois submitted a report on the development of mental health programs in employment and the development of social enterprises hiring and paying people struggling with mental health problems for which it is usually extremely difficult to find employment.

(B) At the request of Professor Denis Therrien, Vice-Chancellor for International Affairs and Research at McGill University, we were mandated to explore with Indian colleagues the possibility of a substantial increase of research collaborations between Québec and India. There is no doubt that the activities of the Institute of Mental Health of Southern India in Bangalore (NIMAN) would allow fruitful exchanges. A memorandum of understanding on this

issue was not signed, however, during a visit to Bangalore of the premier of Quebec, the Honourable Jean Charest.

(3) Japan

Dr. Harnois undertook a tour of the United Nations University in Tokyo in November 2009. This important structure of the United Nations is mandated to develop and share knowledge in areas that are relevant to the promotion, security and development in the world, especially for developing countries. The University provides opinion papers to different departments of the United Nations.

Our University Affiliation - McGill University

Global Health Programs

There is a strong interest in mental health at the international and global levels, both undergraduate and graduate students. At the graduate level, contacts were established with the Faculty of Medicine, at the University of the West Indies in Jamaica and with Belize (see above). At the undergraduate level, following a meeting between Dr. Laporta and members of the McGill International Health Initiative, we are developing an exchange program with Belize, under the auspices of Dr. Claudina Cayetano, herself a graduate in Psychiatry at McGill University.

The Douglas Mental Health University Institute

(1) Conference "Integrating Mental Health into Primary Care: A Global Perspective"

In the wake of the publication by the WHO of the document entitled: "Integrating Mental Health into Primary Care", our collaborating center hosted a conference which included the launch of this document for the region of the Americas and a more general conference on the subject.

http://www.douglas.qc.ca/publications/67/file_fr/poster-conference-ccoms.pdf

The conference focused on different factors to consider in developing effective mental health services at the primary health care level. Participants shared experiences from a variety of countries and cultural contexts, including that of Quebec. The conference was also the name chosen to launch the WHO report mentioned above."

(2) Ministry of Health, Quebec

(A) Bi-annual Days Mental Health

The Montreal CC was invited to participate at the "Bi-annual Mental Health Days" in May 2009. These were organized by the Ministry of Health and focused on the role of primary care in mental health. Dr. Harnois presented on the "WHO Perspective on the integration of mental health into primary health care." The conference attracted 200 guests and participants.

http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/sujets/prob_sante/sante_mentale/index.php?aid=99

(B) French Delegation

In early 2010, we received the request from the Ministry of Health (Quebec) to meet a French delegation mandated to study the Quebec model for mental health interventions in the workplace. Dr. Harnois also represented the position of the WHO on the subject.

(C) World Atlas on intellectual deficiency

In November 2009, the Montreal CC was awarded the prize for international influence.

The International Recognition Award is open to all sectors of public administration in Quebec (Public Service, Education networks, Cities and Health and Social Services) and is awarded to an administrative unit that designed a project that provides its organization with an international outreach.

www.who.int/mental_health/evidence/atlas_id_2007.pdf

(3) Canadian Mental Health Commission - Government of Canada

In October 2009, the Douglas Institute received the Honourable Michael Kirby, chairman of the board of directors of the Canadian Mental Health Commission. The Commission will aim in the next year to mobilize the development of a social movement called "mental health partners" to address issues about mental health and stigma that it undergoes.

In January 2010, the Douglas Institute welcomed two members of the Commission on Mental Health: Louise Bradley, COO, and Phil Upshall, Advisor, Stakeholder Relations. The purpose of their visit was to develop relationships with key partners in mental health in Quebec, including the Douglas. During this busy day, they were able to exchange ideas with many players here and take stock of the level of expertise in terms of research and patient care.

(4) Global Business Roundtable - Government of Canada and the United States

In 2008, the CC was involved to two meetings organized jointly by Dr. Quirion (Director of the Douglas Research Center, and of the Canadian Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction) and by Mr. Bill Wilkerson, director of the Global Business Roundtable. These meetings represented a collaboration between the Governments of Canada and of the U.S., and aimed to develop the thinking on the subject.

Research Center of the Douglas Mental Health University Institute

Researchers at the Institute continue to receive grants at a pace that exceeds that of similar centers: 18 million dollars were awarded in 2009-2010. The Institute has signed two new research agreements, with the Institute of Neurobiology of the Mediterranean (INMRD) of France and the Howard Florey Institute (HFI) of Australia.

The Institute has also signed a collaborative agreement with the Yale Program for Recovery and Community Health (USA): The agreement includes research, education and training

collaborations in connection with the recovery process for people with mental health problems and addiction.

Among the work of researchers at the Institute with a significant international impact, we will mention the following:

- Dr. Rémi Quirion on the characterization of pain in people with hyperalgesia;
- Dr. Michel Perreault on inter-sectoral collaboration in mental health (collaboration with Brazil in particular)
- Dr. Marie-Josée Fleury on the transformation of mental health care
- Dr. Anne Crocker on identifying mental health problems, intellectual disability, the ability to stand trial, criminal responsibility, decision-making
- Dr. Eric Latimer, economist, interested in community supports for people with severe mental disorders
- Dr. Jean Caron, social epidemiology of mental illness, suicide epidemiology, program evaluation and psychometrics.
- Dr. Alain Brunet on post-traumatic stress disorder;
- Dr. Ellen Corin on the social aspects of psychosis (Work in India in particular)
- Dr. Ashok Malla on program evaluation, intervention and prevention of psychoses (PEPP) (Collaborations with India);
- Dr. Michael Meaney on early maternal care and neurodevelopment;
- Dr. Duncan Pedersen on reducing the burden of mental illness in civilian populations exposed to political violence, on psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery, and on services and policies.
- Dr. Jens Pruessner, McGill Centre for Studies in Aging (celebrating 25 years)
- Dr. Martin Lepage, Brain Imaging Centre on the pathophysiology of several mental illnesses including schizophrenia, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and attention deficit disorder.

Of course, the CC also interacts with researchers and professionals that are not based in the Research Centre. Among these, we have recently worked with the following:

Dr. Céline Mercier, Professor in the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, University of Montreal. She is an expert in assessment of programs and services for alcoholism and addictions, and homelessness. As part of the activities of the WHO Collaborating Centre (Douglas Hospital), she has participated in multicenter projects on quality of life, quality of services and monitoring of mental health policy.

Dr. Sonia Lupien, director of the Center on Studies on Human Stress, Scientific Director of the Centre de recherche Fernand-Seguin, and Associate Director of Research, Department of Psychiatry at the University of Montreal, holds the Chair on the mental health of men and women of the Canadian Institutes of Health of men and women. She focuses on the effects of stress over the life cycle and has conducted studies in children and young adults.

Dr Ian Bradley, a professor of psychology at McGill University, was chief of psychology at the McGill University Health Centre from 1980-2006, and distinguishes himself by his skills at assessing group processes.

Mr. Louis Letellier de St. Just, Lawyer in Health Law, worked with the CC and with PAHO as an expert on Human Rights and Health. He works on projects related to mental health policy and recently he was given the responsibility of organizing a training on human rights and mental health in Haiti, to be held in the autumn of 2011.

CONCLUSION

Since the establishment of our Collaborating Centre in 1982, we have been involved in collaborations both with the direction of mental health at the head office in Geneva, and with several regional offices, as well as on the ground in many member countries.

We represent, of course, the Research Centre of the Douglas Institute, but also well beyond, we also interact with several researchers, clinicians and academics from Quebec and Canada.

Our contributions have evolved and grown, and now include novel sectors as well as collaborations committed to the promotion of academic exchanges, to knowledge transfers, to best practices, and to human rights. Our CC therefore continues to contribute to the mission of the WHO, and our expertise continues to adapt to the changing environment of our world, and to the transformation of mental health within it.

We are grateful to the Douglas Foundation for its financial support, and to the Douglas Institute itself for its unwavering support to the Collaborating Centre. These contributions are those that make international work, help to people with mental illness, and global visibility possible.