

## ACOTUP Researcher Profile

**Name of researcher:** Gayle Restall, University of Manitoba

**Degrees and professional qualifications (including fellowships):**

PhD, University of Manitoba, Community Health Sciences, 2010; MSc, University of Alberta, Occupational Therapy, 1991; BMR (OT), University of Manitoba, Occupational Therapy, 1979

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**Area of research:**

My research program focuses on the social inclusion and community participation of people with chronic health conditions across the life span by examining the micro, meso and macro influences on inclusion and participation. Embedded in this research is enquiry directed toward the involvement of people who need health services in their own care, service development and social policymaking. In addition, my program of research has focused on advancing the quality of health care through the advancement and uptake of evidence into practice and health service system change.

**Research related awards and honors:**

- Transdisciplinary Understanding & Training on Research – Primary Health Care (TUTOR-PHC), CIHR Fellowship, (2006-2007)
- Canadian Occupational Therapy Foundation, Doctoral Scholarship, (2006)

**Grants/funding history:**

- Restall, G. (PI), Leclair, L., & Daymont, C. (2015-2016). *Follow-up of children screened for developmental delay at 18-month well-baby visits*. Children's Hospital Research Institute of Manitoba.
- Bernstein, C. (PI), Graff, L., Restall, G., Blanchard, J. Clara, I., Lix, L., Targownik, L. & Walker, J. (2013-2016). *Understanding patients' disease experience: A guide to disease management in IBD*. Canadian Institutes of Health Research.
- Rourke, S. (PI) et al. (2013-2018). *CIHR Centre for REACH in HIV/AIDS*. Canadian Institutes of Health Research.
- Restall, G. (PI). Carnochan, T., Etcheverry, E., Roger, K., Roddy, P. & Sullivan, T. (2012-2013). *Developing research priorities to enhance activity and participation outcomes for people living with HIV*. Canadian Institutes of Health Research.
- Restall, G. (PI), Carnochan, T., Roger, K., Roddy, P., & Sullivan, T. (2011-2012). *Exploring service delivery models to address rehabilitation needs of people living with HIV/AIDS*. Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

**Research collaboration:**

I have been fortunate to be part of several research collaborations. Collaborations have included several research projects for which we have assembled teams that have comprised combinations of researchers from multiple disciplines with expertise in diverse research methods, service providers, policymakers and people living with a chronic health condition. Each member has brought unique and valuable perspectives to the development and implementation of the project

as well as interpretation and communication of the findings. These contributions have enriched the research and made it more relevant.

### **What is the most important thing in mentoring graduate students?**

One of the most important aspects of mentoring graduate students is honoring the mutual journey of learning, growth and discovery. Each experience has made me a better occupational therapist, teacher, researcher and person. Students bring their unique knowledge and skill sets, passions, and worries within the contexts of their individual lives. I believe it is important to honour their individuality, be generous with time, resources and encouragement, provide opportunities for learning and networking, and expect the best.

### **Most significant publications**

- Restall, G., Carnochan, T., Roger, K., Sullivan, T., Etcheverry, E., Roddy, P. (2016). Collaborative priority setting for human immunodeficiency virus rehabilitation research: A case report. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 83, 7-13. doi: 10.1177/0008417415577423. This paper describes a process of engaging diverse stakeholders (people living with HIV, researchers, service providers, policymakers) in a collaborative research priority setting. It also illustrates application of a conceptual framework for evaluating the outcomes of the engagement process.
- Restall, G. (2015). Conceptualizing the outcomes of involving people who use mental health services in policy development. *Health Expectations*, 18, 1167-1179. doi: 10.1111/hex.12091. This paper provides an empirically developed conceptual framework for assessing the outcomes of involvement processes that include people who use mental health services in social policymaking. It encourages a systematic way of considering the outcomes of involvement to promote processes that go beyond tokenism.
- Restall, G., Ripat, J. & Stern, M. (2003). A framework of strategies for client-centred practice. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 70, 103-112. This paper encourages understanding of client-centred practice as being influenced by many personal and environmental factors and presents strategies to address barriers to client-centred practice.

### **Tips would you give for new investigators:**

*Find mentors.* Seek advice from trusted and experienced people about research and career development.

*Start small.* Use small grants to build an independent program of research. Small grants will allow you to do pilot or proof of concept studies that can develop into larger projects.

*Start building research collaborations.* Seek out people with the same interests and passions that you have. Find people whose “ways of doing business” are congruent with your own values and ethics. Join teams doing research in similar areas.

*Network.* Attend conferences, meetings, social opportunities that may connect you with others who may become mentors or collaborators.

*Keep in mind that timing is everything.* Develop a 3 to 5 year plan while being open to opportunities.

*Establish criteria for opportunities to which you will say “yes.”* As a new investigator, you may be tempted to take every opportunity that comes along or, alternatively, take only those that are specifically related to a narrow interest. Make a list of criteria that would make a “good”

opportunity for you as a new investigator (e.g., developing specific research skills, improving your ability to get research funding in your area of interest, advancing your career in a way that you would like, etc.). Each time a new opportunity comes along match it against your criteria and determine how it fits. Review the criteria regularly as your skills and interests develop. *Keep challenges and setbacks in perspective. Persist.*

**Resources/supports/training programs for new investigators:**

Many training programs that can enhance research skills in specific methodological areas are offered locally, nationally, and internationally. These can be great networking as well as training opportunities. Workshops such as those related to grant and manuscript writing can also be valuable. Seek advice from experienced grant writers and researchers.