

Operating Grant: COVID-19 Mental Health & Substance Use Service Needs and Delivery

Instructions:

The [Operating Grant: COVID-19 Mental Health & Substance Use Service Needs and Delivery](#) aims to address the specific mental health and/or substance use crisis response needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and/or the strategies to contain and mitigate its impact.

As outlined in the conditions of funding, funded teams are required to submit a quarterly knowledge mobilization update. The purpose of this report is to inform CIHR's knowledge mobilization efforts, promote the work being done by teams funded in this competition, and better understand the challenges that research teams are experiencing and how those challenges may influence the effective mobilization of this knowledge.

Information recorded in this report may be made available to [knowledge users](#), including policy makers, healthcare and service providers, partners, and the general public, and may be used to facilitate additional CIHR knowledge mobilization activities, and enable linkages between research teams and partners and/or knowledge users.

Email completed report to COVID19MH-COVID19SM@cihr-irsc.gc.ca by **February 25, 2021**.

Date: February 25, 2021

Project Title: Acceptability and Impact of a Prenatal Internet Intervention for Promoting Maternal Mental Health in the COVID-19 Context

Nominated Principal Investigator (name and primary affiliation): Deborah Da Costa, PhD, Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre

Please list any websites and/or social media accounts affiliated with this project that CIHR may wish to link, tag or amplify: We will release this as soon as we have obtained final ethics approval.

Target/priority population(s) under investigation: Pregnant women

Key Messages (maximum 100 words):

- Pregnant women have been identified as a high risk group who may be more vulnerable to the mental health impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- Now more than ever, innovative approaches to overcome practical and access barriers to mental health services amid the COVID-19 pandemic and its fallout are needed to prevent and treat emotional difficulties during the perinatal period. To address this need we will evaluate an

internet delivered *universal* program targeting maternal mental health in terms of reach, engagement, and impact on key mental health outcomes amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Provide a plain language (lay summary) update on the current status of this project to be published on CIHR's website <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/52079.html> (maximum 100 words):

We are awaiting final approval from our institution's Research Ethics Board. Based on our communication with the REB research office, we should obtain approval by 02/26/2021. Our on-line platform has been updated and is ready to be launched. Students have been involved in the updates and have been testing various wellness apps that we recommend in our resources section. Our assessment measures have been programmed into REDCAP in both French and English and pre-tested by members of our team. We have identified various network groups targeting pregnant women in the Montreal area to assist with recruitment via social media.

What are the potential implications of this work? (e.g. for policy, health care practice, mental health and substance use service delivery; maximum 100 words)

Our comprehensive e-health intervention is designed to be self-guided and is tailored to the perinatal period with content targeting risk and protective factors for perinatal psychological distress. This bilingual intervention was designed and piloted to fit alongside existing antenatal care services. Evaluating user uptake, engagement and benefits in promoting maternal mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic will provide new knowledge on how digital approaches can be rolled out rapidly across Canada to address the mental of vulnerable populations. Our approach of promoting maternal health through preventive action has the potential to positively impact maternal, infant, and family outcomes.

List any specific challenges to conducting this research within the COVID-19 context (maximum 100 words):

Our institutional REB is experiencing increased turnaround times in the review and approval process as a result of the large number of vaccine and therapeutic related project submissions.

List any factors that are facilitating the progress and/or uptake of this research (maximum 100 words):

Our intervention is completely on-line as is our assessments eliminating the need for any in person contact which is important during the ongoing pandemic. There is a lot of interest in the project from perinatal health care workers and researchers working with women during the perinatal period.

List up to 10 keywords specific to this project to facilitate website search filters and sorting:

(e.g. depression, virtual care, autism, opioids, racism, chronic pain, sleep, etc.)

pregnancy, mental health, on-line psychoeducation, universal program, healthy behaviours