“Access to Dental, Medical and other Health Care for People with Autism Spectrum Disorder”

**Dr. Helene Ouellette-Kuntz**  
Professor, Queen’s University  
Dept. of Public Health Sciences  
Director, NEDSAC, MAPS  
“What every Canadian health professional (including dentists) should know about the epidemiology of autism spectrum disorder in our country”

**Dr. Mel Schwartz**  
Chief, Dept. of Dentistry  
Jewish General Hospital  
Associate Professor, McGill University  
“Providing Care to Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Dentist’s Experience”

**Dr. Haider Al-Waeli**  
PhD student,  
Faculty of Dentistry  
McGill University  
“My Daughter Is an Autistic Child, Where To Go, What To Do and What I Want You To Know?”

**Salvatore Guerrera**  
Member of Board of Directors,  
Miriam Foundation  
“Peace, Love, Challenge & fight for a cause … with Innovation - make a difference”

**Malvina Klag**  
Miriam Foundation  
“Navigating the “hyphen spaces” between the community and public sectors: the case of dental and medical care for Quebeckers with autism and intellectual disabilities”

**Presentation descriptions on next page**

Friday April 8, 9-12 noon, followed by a light lunch  
3640 University Street, Room M/48  
McGill University, Montreal, Quebec

**Moderator:** Dr. Richard Hovey, PhD, Associate Professor,  
Oral Health and Society, Faculty of Dentistry, McGill University

All are welcome

Hosts: Dr. Paul Allison at (paul.Allison@mcgill.ca), Dr. Frances Power at (frances.power@mcgill.ca)
Dr. Helene Ouellette-Kuntz

Epidemiology is the study of the patterns, causes and effects of health and disease conditions in defined populations. Recent years have seen dramatic increases in the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in Canada and elsewhere. Autism Canada’s website indicates that “according to the latest estimates (March 2014) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1 in 68 8-year old children in the United States has been identified with autism spectrum disorder”. Through this presentation, the meaning of prevalence versus incidence and what is known about each in relation to ASD in Canada will be reviewed. Implications for service provision with a focus on dental care will be discussed.

Dr. Haider Al-Waeli

The reality of having an autistic child in your life is hard enough. More challenging and stressing as a father is the feeling of discomfort and lack of understanding, how to get an access to the dental or general health services. The presentation will try to spot the light on the difficulties or the facilities that face the family of autistic child to get access to the dental or general health services. How they deal with this task and what are the real services they can have. The hope and the smile also exist and will try to cover them in this heart to heart short talk.

Malvina Klag

There are approximately 150,000 Quebeckers living with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and/or intellectual disabilities (ID). The lack of access to proper dental and medical care for adults with ASD and ID is deeply troubling and rooted in multiple systemic elements, not the least of which is insufficient remuneration for physicians and dentists serving these populations and a lack of training to better equip health professionals to treat this population. Cascading effects of these factors include: unnecessary hospitalizations, avoidable emergency room visits, avoidable behavioural problems, and undiagnosed or inadequately treated medical conditions. All of these come at a tremendous cost, in terms of both impact on the quality of life of these individuals and their families, and financial strain on the healthcare system. This presentation will outline the Miriam Foundation’s strategy that is not without challenges as a community organization, to help catalyze improved access to publicly funded dental and medical care for these vulnerable populations.

Dr. Mel Schwartz

A clinician/educator’s insight on the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour required to provide dental care to individuals with autism spectrum disorder will be presented. A report to the Canadian Dental Association and the Association of Canadian Faculties of Dentistry on Meeting the Needs For Special Care Dentistry in Canada was recently completed. Recommendations regarding access to care advocacy, dental education, and funding will be discussed.

Salvatore Guerrera

Advocacy for persons with special needs includes: support and leadership of organizations providing life-long services to persons with special needs philanthropic projects to supplement services provided by the health-care system, such as communal living, respite and geriatric residences increasing visibility in the public arena of issues often hidden from view supporting the development of legislation to improve access to diagnostic services developing pilot projects to provide medical and dental care for persons with special needs supporting the development of a Canada wide collaboration of parents and providers developing legislation and public action to support human rights of persons with special needs.