





### **NCOHR Summer Research Institute**

Life Course Approach to Oral Health

August 2016

### Setting the stage

Imagine that you have to talk to someone about who you are, but you could not provide any information about your past, or about things that have happened to you last year, 10 years ago or when you were a child. You probably guessed that it would be difficult to say much about yourself simply because your past is an integrant part of who you are now; you want to mention about your past experiences, events, occurrences in your life that have shaped who you are today.

Now, think about a chronic oral disease. Can you really understand how it develops without looking into the past, or even better, without following in to the progression of such disease?

### The background

Dental decay and periodontal disease are mostly cumulative across the life span, yet they are preventable. Although they are also among the most frequently reported diseases worldwide, they are described as the "silent epidemic". Chronic oral diseases remain unequally distributed within populations; disadvantaged groups or of lower socio economic status seem to bear most of the psychosocial and financial burden, from childhood to the end of life. Nonetheless, biomedical models and clinically focused definitions of oral health continue to prevail when causes and progression of dental decay and other oral diseases are studied. Given that such *bio-clinical* models and definitions do not account for the complex interplay of the socio-environmental, psychological, and behavioural factors of disease progression longitudinally, alternative theories and multilevel research approaches that foster interdisciplinary are needed to understand the course of oral disease overtime.

In this context, the life course approach emerges to explore people's lives within structural, social, and cultural contexts throughout the life span. It examines an individual's life history and the influences of life events such as marriage and divorce and other exposures (e.g., childhood infection) on the risk of disease and other outcomes later in life. It entails a multidisciplinary paradigm to include an interplay of social and health disciplines, while directing attention to the



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powerful connection between individual lives and the historical and socioeconomic context in which their lives unfold. A life course approach emphasizes a temporal and social perspective, looking back across life experiences for clues to current patterns of health and disease, whilst recognising that both past and present experiences are shaped by the wider social, economic and cultural contexts.

This research approach can be successfully applied to the study of oral health and disease. Nevertheless, only a few Canadian dental researchers have employed this framework. There is a need to build capacity in life course perspective to better explore the complex interplay of life events, social context, and biological factors in the development of oral diseases and the maintenance of oral health for life.

Such premises led Drs. Brondani, Amin, Nicolau and Poon to organize and host a three-day interdisciplinary and multi-sectorial workshop in August 2016 at the University of British Columbia (UBC) Faculty of Dentistry.

### Summer Research Institute description:

The 3-day Summer Institute covered the foundational ideas about population health and epidemiology as applicable to life course research in oral health. The Institute also brought together local and national perspectives from junior and senior research trainees and academics. Participants were encouraged to brainstorm ways to better utilize the life course approach in oral health research. The Institute also explored ways to better prepare future Canadian researchers with knowledge and skills on this underutilized approach to oral health research.

### Summer Research Institute objectives:

By the end of this 3-day Summer Institute, participants were able to:

- Situate the life course approach as applicable to oral health research;
- Explore the connection among live course concepts;
- Describe the different models in live course research;
- Appreciate the use of qualitative and quantitative methods in life course research;





• Draft a 1-page research proposal (per each group) on the use of life course approach in self-selected oral health topics. These research proposal drafts should briefly outline the gap in knowledge, objectives, methods and expected outcomes.

### **Summary of Activities**

The workshop had 21 participants representing Laval University, McGill University, University of Saskatchewan, University of Toronto, University of British Columbia (Faculty of Dentistry and the School of Population ad Public Health), University of Montreal, University of Alberta, University of Indiana (U.S.A), and the Canadian Dental Hygienist Association (Ottawa, Ontario).

The main presenters were Drs. Brondani, Amin, Nicolau and Poon and two of their trainees, Drs Madathil (from McGill University) and Elyasi (from University of Alberta). Participants also received a comprehensive list of all oral health-related publications using the life course in one way or another, prepared by another trainee, Dr Gazzaz (the list is attached at the end of this report). The three days were structured to introduce the life course approach to oral health research in both epidemiology and qualitative methodologies to the participants, to discuss current Canadian research using life course, and to present some of the existing national and international data sets that can be used in life course studies. Overall, the activities were divided into two main interdisciplinary areas: life course epidemiology and life course in social sciences. While in epidemiology a life course approach studies the physical and social hazards during gestation, childhood, adolescence, young adulthood and midlife that affect chronic disease risk and health outcomes in later life, in qualitative inquiry a life course approach focuses on the meaning of health and disease experiences across the life span.

Each presentation was followed by whole group discussions, and interactive working groups to develop and explore possible research ideas in life course while learning the skills needed to employ life course theory, concepts and methodologies. At the end of day 3, each of the four groups formed presented a 1-page summary of their proposed research idea that showed their engagement within the group while understanding the limitation of their knowledge. The research questions that the groups presented showed breadth and depth in scope, and were focused in different areas, from exploring *the extent to which do grandparents' tooth loss experience predict the trajectory of their grandchildren tooth loss through adulthood'* to addressing '*the extent to which do biological, social, and environmental factors experienced in early childhood influence the progression of early childhood caries (ECC) in children?* 







Below are some of the summative points discussed throughout the 3 days:

- The chronic and cumulative characteristics of oral diseases and their interactions between biological, behavioural, socio-cultural, and contextual factors makes them a good fit for life course research.
- Life course as a perspective, an approach, and/or a theory is an umbrella term to both qualitative and quantitative methodologies.
- Life course may be intuitive, but it is complex and requires interdisciplinary research teams to be successful.
- Longitudinal studies may not lend themselves to be studies under the life course approach. A life course theoretical conceptualization of disease causation is not only a collection of exposure data across the life course. Rather, it involves a theoretical conceptualization with a temporal ordering of exposure variables and their interrelationships, both directly and indirectly, with the outcome of interest.
- Given the temporal ordering of events and the impact of expose variables over time, birth cohort studies are the best fit for life course research.
- Although there is no large birth cohort in Canada yet, countries like New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Norway and Brazil, among others, do offer a diverse of data information from their respective studies; data acquisition may be an issue to some of these birth cohort studies.
- Those embarking in life course research should be aware of its origins, development and application.
- Life course approach brings the bio-socio-psychological and historical-cultural pathways to oral disease development together.

### Future research and points for discussion:

The participants and the presenters raised key points for further consideration and research, including:

- The need to differentiate between longitudinal research design and longitudinal studies using a life course approach;
- As a tool to collect information throughout the life course, the life grid should be carefully considered when used in quantitative or qualitative inquiries;
- The complexity of life course research could be better entangled with the use of mixed methods research.



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#### 2016 NETWORK FOR CANADIAN ORAL HEALTH RESEARCH (NCOHR) Summer Research Institute in Life Course Approach to Oral Health Research

Suggested Reading List prepared by Dr Arwa Gazzaz, Ph.D student

#### I. <u>REVIEW ARTICLES/ EDITORIAL</u>

- Schuch, H. S., Peres, K. G., Do, L. G., & Peres, M. A. (2015). Can socioeconomic trajectories during the life influence periodontal disease occurrence in adulthood? Hypotheses from a life-course perspective. *Medical Hypotheses*, 84(6), 596–600. <u>http://doi.org/10.1016/j.mehy.2015.03.011</u>
- Abreu, L. G., Elyasi, M., Badri, P., Paiva, S. M., Flores-Mir, C., & Amin, M. (2015). Factors associated with the development of dental caries in children and adolescents in studies employing the life course approach: a systematic review. *European Journal of Oral Sciences*, 123(5), 305–311. http://doi.org/10.1111/eos.12206
- Heilmann A, Tsakos G, Watt RG. Oral Health Over the Life Course. In: Burton-Jeangros C, Cullati S, Sacker A, Blane D, editors. A Life Course Perspective on Health Trajectories and Transitions. Cham: Springer International Publishing; 2015. pp. 39–59.
- 4. Singh, A., Harford, J., Watt, R. G., & Peres, M. A. (2015). The role of theories in explaining the association between social inequalities and population oral health: a scoping review protocol. *The JBI Database of Systematic Reviews and Implementation Reports*, 13(4), 30. <u>http://doi.org/10.11124/jbisrir-2015-2038</u>
- 5. Watt, R., Listl, S., Peres, M., & Heilmann, A. (Eds.). (2015). Social inequalities in oral health: from evidence to action. London: International Centre for Oral Health Inequalities Research & Policy.
- 6. Gupta, B., Lalloo, R., & Johnson, N. W. (2015). Life course models for upper aero-digestive tract cancer. International Dental Journal, 65(3), 111–119. <u>http://doi.org/10.1111/idj.12167</u>
- Demarco, F. F., Peres, K. G., & Peres, M. A. (2014). Life course epidemiology and its implication for oral health. *Brazilian Oral Research*, 28(1), 1–2. <u>http://doi.org/10.1590/S1806-83242014.50000006</u>
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- 9. Sisson, K. L. (2007). Theoretical explanations for social inequalities in oral health. *Community Dentistry* and Oral Epidemiology, 35(2), 81–88. <u>http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-0528.2007.00354.x</u>
- Northridge, M., & Lamster, I. (2004). A life course approach to preventing and treating oral disease. Sozial- Und PreVentivmedizin / Social and Preventive Medicine / MDecine Sociale Et PreVentive, 49(5), 1–2. <u>http://doi.org/10.1007/s00038-004-4040-8</u>
- 11. Watt, R. G. (2002). Emerging theories into the social determinants of health: implications for oral health promotion. *Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology*, *30*(4), 241–247. <u>http://doi.org/10.1034/j.1600-0528.2002.300401.x</u>

#### II. EXAMPLES OF THESIS / DISSERTATION

12. Nicolau, Belinda Farias. (2000) " The relationship between conditions in early life and along the life





course and oral health status in teenagers." Doctoral dissertation University of London, University College London. Retrieved from *ProQuest Digital Dissertations Web*. <u>http://ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/docview/175</u> 2803162?accountid=14656

- 13. Haixia, Lu. (2011) "Trends in oral health during early childhood and adolescence in Hong Kong Chinese: a life course approach". Doctoral dissertation The University of Hong Kong. Retrieved from <a href="https://hub.hku.hk/bitstream/10722/143217/3/FullText.pdf">https://hub.hku.hk/bitstream/10722/143217/3/FullText.pdf</a>
- 14. Golkari, A. (2009) " Developmental defects of enamel as biomarkers of early childhood life events: developing methods for their use in life course epidemiology." Doctoral dissertation University of London, University College London. Retrieved from *ProQuest Digital Dissertations Web*. <u>http://ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/docview/177</u> <u>1283687?accountid=14656</u>

#### III. QUANTITATIVE PAPERS

#### a. Cohort Studies including Birth Cohort:

- Broadbent, J. M., Zeng, J., Foster Page, L. A., Baker, S. R., Ramrakha, S., & Thomson, W. M. (2016). Oral Health-related Beliefs, Behaviors, and Outcomes through the Life Course. *Journal of Dental Research*, 0022034516634663. <u>http://doi.org/10.1177/0022034516634663</u>
- Delgado-Angulo, E. K., & Bernabe, E. (2015). Comparing lifecourse models of social class and adult oral health using the 1958 National Child Development Study. *Community Dental Health*. <u>http://doi.org/10.1922/CDH\_3412Angulo06</u>
- 17. Brennan, D. S., & Spencer, A. J. (2015). Income-based life-course models of caries in 30-year-old Australian adults. *Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology*, *43*(3), 262–271. http://doi.org/10.1111/cdoe.12150
- Thomson, W. M., Broadbent, J. M., Foster Page, L. A., & Poulton, R. (2013). Antecedents and Associations of Root Surface Caries Experience among 38-Year-Olds. *Caries Research*, 47(2), 128– 134. <u>http://doi.org/10.1159/000345078</u>
- Boeira, G. F., Correa, M. B., Peres, K. G., Peres, M. A., Santos, I. S., Matijasevich, A., et al. (2012). Caries Is the Main Cause for Dental Pain in Childhood: Findings from a Birth Cohort. *Caries Research*, 46(5), 488–495. <u>http://doi.org/10.1159/000339491</u>
- 20. Holst, D., & Schuller, A. A. (2012). Oral health in a life-course: birth-cohorts from 1929 to 2006 in Norway. *Community Dental Health*, 29(2), 134–143. <u>http://doi.org/10.1922/CDH\_2780Holst10</u>
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- 22. Lu, H. X., Wong, M. C. M., Lo, E. C. M., & McGrath, C. (2011). Trends in oral health from childhood to early adulthood: a life course approach. *Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology*, *39*(4), 352–60. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-0528.2011.00611.x
- Jonathan M Broadbent BDS, P., Thomson W Murray BSc, B. M. M. P., Boyens John V BDS, M., & Poulton Richie BSc, P. M. P. P. (2011). Dental plaque and oral health during the first 32 years of life. *Journal of the American Dental Association (1939)*, 142(4), 415–426. <u>http://doi.org/10.14219/jada.archive.2011.0197</u>
- Shearer, D. M., Thomson, W. M., Caspi, A., Moffitt, T. E., Broadbent, J. M., & Poulton, R. (2011). Family history and oral health: findings from the Dunedin Study. *Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology*, 40(2), 105–115. <u>http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-0528.2011.00641.x</u>
- 25. Arora, A., Scott, J. A., Bhole, S., Do, L., Schwarz, E., & Blinkhorn, A. S. (2011). Early childhood feeding practices and dental caries in preschool children: a multi-centre birth cohort study. *BMC Public Health*,





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- Astrom, A. N., Ekback, G., Ordell, S., & Unell, L. (2011). Socio-behavioral predictors of changes in dentition status: a prospective analysis of the 1942 Swedish birth cohort. *Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology*, 39(4), 300–10. <u>http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-0528.2010.00594.x</u>
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- Pearce, M. S., Thomson, W. M., Walls, A. W. G., & Steele, J. G. (2009). Lifecourse Socio-economic Mobility and Oral Health in Middle Age. *Journal of Dental Research*, *88*(10), 938–941. <u>http://doi.org/10.1177/0022034509344524</u>
- 30. Peres, K. G., Peres, M. A., Araujo, C. L., Menezes, A. M., & Hallal, P. C. (2009b). Social and dental status along the life course and oral health impacts in adolescents: a population-based birth cohort. *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*, 7(1), 95–10. http://doi.org/10.1186/14777525-7-95
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- Chaves, A. M. B., Rosenblatt, A., & Oliveira, O. F. B. (2007). Enamel defects and its relation to life course events in primary dentition of Brazilian children: a longitudinal study. *Community Dental Health*, 24(1), 31–36.
- Mason, J., Pearce, M. S., Walls, A. W. G., Parker, L., & Steele, J. G. (2006). How do factors at different stages of the lifecourse contribute to oral-health-related quality of life in middle age for men and women? *Journal of Dental Research*, 85(3), 257–261 <u>http://doi.org/10.1177/154405910608500310</u>
- Thomson, W. M., Poulton, R., Milne, B. J., Caspi, A., Broughton, J. R., & Ayers, K. M. S. (2004). Socioeconomic inequalities in oral health in childhood and adulthood in a birth cohort. *Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology*, 32(5), 345–353. <u>http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-0528.2004.00173.x</u>
- Poulton, R., Caspi, A., Milne, B. J., Thomson, W. M., Taylor, A., Sears, M. R., & Moffitt, T. E. (2002). Association between children's experience of socioeconomic disadvantage and adult health: a lifecourse study. *The Lancet*, *360*(9346), 1640–1645. <u>http://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(02)11602-3</u>

#### b. Case-Control

- Krishna Rao, S., Mejia, G. C., Roberts-Thomson, K., Logan, R. M., Kamath, V., Kulkarni, M., & Mittinty, M. N. (2015). Estimating the Effect of Childhood Socioeconomic Disadvantage on Oral Cancer in India Using Marginal Structural Models. *Epidemiology*, 26(4), 509–517. http://doi.org/10.1097/EDE.00000000000312
- Castro, G. D. C., Oppermann, R. V., HAAS, A. N., Winter, R., & Alchieri, J. C. (2006). Association between psychosocial factors and periodontitis: a case-control study. *Journal of Clinical Periodontology*, 33(2), 109–114. <u>http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-051X.2005.00878.x</u>

#### c. <u>Cross – Sectional</u>

- Shin, B.-M., Ryu, J.-I., Sheiham, A., Do, L. G., & Jung, S.-H. (2015). Which life course model better explains the association between socioeconomic position and periodontal health? *Journal of Clinical Periodontology*, 42(3), 213–220. <u>http://doi.org/10.1111/jcpe.12360</u>
- 39. Sim, S. J., & Han, D. H. (2015). Association between childhood socioeconomic position and





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- Bernabé, E., Suominen, A. L., Nordblad, A., Vehkalahti, M. M., Hausen, H., Knuuttila, M., et al. (2010). Education level and oral health in Finnish adults: evidence from different lifecourse models. *Journal of Clinical Periodontology*, *38*(1), 25–32. <u>http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-051X.2010.01647.x</u>
- 41. *The Australian Research Centre for Population Oral Health*. (2010). Dental caries experience among young Australian adults. *Australian Dental Journal*, 55(4), 468–471. <u>http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1834-7819.2010.01272.x</u>
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- Peres, K. G., de Oliveira Latorre, M. D. R. D., Sheiham, A., Peres, M. A., Victora, C. G., & BARROS, F. C. (2007). Social and biological early life influences on the prevalence of open bite in Brazilian 6year-olds. *International Journal of Paediatric Dentistry / the British Paedodontic Society [and] the International Association of Dentistry for Children*, 17(1), 41–49. <u>http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-</u> <u>263X.2006.00793.x</u>
- Nicolau, B., Netuveli, G., Kim, J.-W. M., Sheiham, A., & Marcenes, W. (2007a). A life-course approach to assess psychosocial factors and periodontal disease. *Journal of Clinical Periodontology*, 34(10), 844–850. <u>http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-051X.2007.01123.x</u>
- 47. Sheiham, A., & Nicolau, B. (2005). Evaluation of social and psychological factors in periodontal disease. *Periodontology 2000, 39*(1), 118–131. <u>http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-0757.2005.00115.x</u>
- Nicolau, B., Marcenes, W., Allison, P., & Sheiham, A. (2005b). The life course approach: explaining the association between height and dental caries in Brazilian adolescents. *Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology*, 33(2), 93–98. <u>http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-0528.2005.00213.x</u>
- 49. Nicolau, B., Marcenes, W., & Bartley, M. (2005a). Associations between socio- economic circumstances at two stages of life and adolescents' oral health status. *Journal of Public Health Dentistry*

http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1752-7325.2005.tb02782.x

- Nicolau, B., Marcenes, W., & Sheiham, A. (2003a). The relationship between traumatic dental injuries and adolescents' development along the life course. *Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology*, *31*(4), 306–313. <u>http://doi.org/10.1034/j.1600-0528.2003.t01-1-00019.x</u>
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- 52. Nicolau, B., Marcenes, W., Hardy, R., & Sheiham, A. (2003c). A life-course approach to assess the relationship between social and psychological circumstances and gingival status in adolescents. *Journal of Clinical Periodontology*, *30*(12), 1038–45. <u>http://doi.org/10.1046/j.0303-6979.2003.00424.x</u>

#### IV. QUALITATIVE PAPERS

- 53. Maida, C. A., Marcus, M., Hays, R. D., Coulter, I. D., Ramos-Gomez, F., Lee, S. Y., et al. (2015). Child and adolescent perceptions of oral health over the life course. *Quality of Life Research*, *24*(11), 2739–2751. <u>http://doi.org/10.1007/s11136-015-1015-6</u>
- 54. Muirhead, V., Levine, A., Nicolau, B., Landry, A., & Bedos, C. (2013). Life course experiences and lay





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#### V. FEW EXAMPLES OF INDIRECT USE OF LIFE COURSE

- 1. Bright, M. A., Alford, S. M., Hinojosa, M. S., Knapp, C., & Fernandez-Baca, D. E. (2014). Adverse childhood experiences and dental health in children and adolescents. *Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology*, *43*(3), 193–199. http://doi.org/10.1111/cdoe.12137
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- 4. Thorstensson, H., & Johansson, B. (2010). Why do some people lose teeth across their lifespan whereas others retain a functional dentition into very old age? *Gerodontology*, 27(1), 19–25. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2358.2009.00297.x
- Macfarlane, T. V., Kenealy, P., Anne Kingdon, H., Mohlin, B., Pilley, J. R., Mwangi, C. W., et al. (2009). Orofacial pain in young adults and associated childhood and adulthood factors: results of the population study, Wales, United Kingdom. *Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology*, 37(5), 438–450. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-0528.2009.00482.x
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