STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

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Daniel Harris

In 2021, Daniel Harris, MPH, Doctoral Candidate, Division of Epidemiology, Dalla Lana School of Public Health and Co-Editor-In-Chief, University for Toronto, Journal of Public Health was awarded the CAPT-ACTP **Emerging Leader (Active Student) Scholarship** in support of his research addressing the overuse and misuse of psychotropic medications in long-term care (LTC), namely antipsychotics, is a decades-old public health challenge that has commanded substantial research and policy attention.

As noted by Daniel in his proposed research summary to the CAPT-ACTP scholarship review panel, "Although historically used to treat the neuropsychiatric symptoms of dementia (e.g., aggressive behaviors), antipsychotics are only modestly effective and associated with adverse events, such as falls and sudden death. In light of these risks, antipsychotic deprescribing has become a major focus in Canadian LTC over the past decade."

Further, Daniel stated that the doctoral research "aims to understand how antipsychotic deprescribing may have unintentionally impacted other dimensions of care in LTC. For example, I am interested in exploring the extent and potential impact of antipsychotic medication substitution, or the switching of antipsychotics with other sedating medications (e.g., antidepressants) that have their own profile of health risks. A key element of my research also seeks to advance the methods related to measuring drug switching with pharmacy claims data (i.e., how to identify and account for switching patterns like cross-tapering). My future work will continue to explore medication use in LTC, such as the comparative effectiveness and safety of medicinal cannabis for the treatment of dementia's neuropsychiatric symptoms – an area of particular interest to LTC residents, families, and local organizations."

Daniel Harris is a 4th-year PhD Candidate in the Division of Epidemiology at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health. Daniel's doctoral research investigates patterns of psychotropic medication use among older adults with dementia, with a particular focus on the potential unintended consequences of policies to reduce antipsychotic use in long-term care. Prior to attending the University of Toronto, Daniel completed his Master of Public Health at Brown University, where his interest in pharmacoepidemiology and aging began. Following his PhD, Daniel aims to develop a research program centered on the application of advanced data science techniques (e.g., machine learning and predictive analytics) to prominent issues in pharmacoepidemiology and aging research.