



# Rural Maternity Care Research

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## THE RM-NET

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## Happy New Year: Reflections on 2007

It is hard to believe that January is over and we are one month into 2008. The new year has been a busy one so far at the Centre for Rural Health Research. We have been on a retreat on Saltspring Island, to meetings in Trail and Rossland, BC, and attended the first ever Canadian Continuing Medical Education (CME) event for General Practitioner Surgeons in Banff, Alberta. We also capped off the Christmas season in 2007 with Christmas carols at a local retirement home. Although it is only a few weeks into the year, we are already mapping out the upcoming months with fieldwork, conferences, and symposia opportunities.



Stefan Grzybowski and co-investigator Nadine Caron at the Banff CME event

Throughout 2007 we focused on knowledge translation by connecting with fellow researchers, as well as key stakeholders in communities, the Ministry of Health, and regional Health Authorities, to share findings from our research projects. At a community level, we were delighted



Moms and babies from Queen Charlotte Islands

to fund two seed grant projects on issues in rural maternity care. Shannon Greenwood looked at the pre and postnatal needs of women in the Queen Charlotte Islands, and Drs. Len and Barbara Kosiec studied the experiences of women accessing maternity care from the Elkford Valley.

The RM-NET hosted two symposia in 2007, one in June on Rural Surgical Services and a Co-Investigators' Symposium in November. Jude and Stefan presented at the Society of Academic Primary Care in London, England, in the summer.

In addition to wrapping up and publishing the findings from our past research, new projects are in the works for the coming year. We put in a data request for the Maternal and Newborn Outcomes project and are validating a

survey on the stress of parturient women who have to travel to give birth. We are also starting a study into the barriers and facilitators of inter-professional collaboration between midwives and other care providers in rural communities and will be working with colleagues in the North on a study regarding the efficacy of the Fetal Fibronectin test when used at term as a predictor of the onset of labour.



The team with Dr. Alan Bernstein

Other highlights from 2007 included visits to our office from Dr. Alan Bernstein, president of the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR) and Ian Graham, VP of Knowledge Translation for CIHR.

As we move forward with the new year, we are eager to share our work with you and hope you'll visit [www.ruralmatresearch.net](http://www.ruralmatresearch.net) to learn more about the exciting work taking place at the Centre for Rural Health Research.



Invitational Meeting on Rural Surgical Services, Vancouver, June 2007

# New Faces in the RM-NET Office

The faces in our office have changed this past year. Two of our research assistants were accepted into postgraduate health care programs: Andy Birse left for the Prince George Medical School program and Kate LeBlanc was accepted to the UBC School of Midwifery. In addition, Karen McKinnon, our post-doctoral fellow, accepted a faculty position at the University of Victoria.



Research assistants Reyna Ramolete and Melanie McDonald at the Co-Investigators' Symposium

Lana Sullivan took a position as network coordinator with the BC Rural and Remote Health Research Network. Research coordinator Cynthia Hsieh, after working at the RM-NET for three years, left for another health research opportunity at UBC. She is currently 5 months pregnant and is looking forward to the birth of her first child.

The RM-NET was joined by three new research assistants, Melanie McDonald, Bryce Westlake, and Reyna Ramolete. Melanie recently received her BA in International Relations and Anthropology and is interested in the global health issues of vulnerable populations. Bryce comes to us with a BA in Psychology and an interest in our mapping and stress and pregnancy projects. Reyna has been an invaluable member of the team for the past 8 months and will soon go traveling in South America be-



The RM-NET team singing Christmas carols at a local retirement home with Nancy Humber, GP Surgeon from Lillooet, on piano [not pictured].

fore pursuing her law degree in social justice. We also hired a writing and editing support person, Sarah Munro, who recently completed an MA in English and brings to the team her experiences in doula support, breastfeeding advocacy, and an enthusiasm for studying the social ubiquity of caesarean birth. Also new to the team are two Community Based Clinician Investigators, Stuart Iglesias and Ilene Bell.



**If you are interested in more information, please contact us at:**

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On behalf of the Centre for Rural Health Research and RM-NET, we would like to thank you for your continued support and participation in this program of research. Emerging results from the studies we have undertaken are providing planners with the evidence base to evaluate how maternity care services are currently being delivered, and what challenges need to be overcome in order to meet the needs of women, their families, care providers, and administrators.

In the coming years, we are committed to continue to present our research findings to policy-makers and Health Authorities in the hopes of providing an evidence-base in which to frame decisions in rural health services planning. Thank you again for allowing us to conduct this research through your continued assistance and collaboration.

We value and welcome your input, and would be happy to answer any questions you may have about our past and current research activities. Please do not hesitate to contact any of us.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year!

Jude Kornelsen, Stefan Grzybowski, and the RM-NET team