

ACOTUP Researcher Profile

Name of researcher: Isabelle Gélinas, McGill

Degrees and professional qualifications (including fellowships):

Postdoctoral Fellow; PhD (Rehabilitation Sciences); Certificate (Aging Studies), MSc (OT); BSc (OT)

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Area of research: My research focuses on the activities and the contextual factors (personal and environmental) that shape the level of social participation of adults and elderly with disability. More specifically, my research encompasses two main domains: Driving rehabilitation and Activities of Daily Living. Presently my research projects are directed at: the assessment and training of driving abilities in clients with disabilities; the evaluation of functional abilities in persons with cognitive deficits such as dementia, Schizophrenia, Traumatic Brain Injury; the impact of personal and environmental factors on the participation and social inclusion of persons with a disability as well as the implementation of interventions to support their participation in the community.

Research related awards and honor:

- Best Video Honors at the 2013 AUTO21 NCE Conference (2013)
- David Strauss Award, best poster at American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine (ACRM) from The Brain Injury Interdisciplinary Special Interest Group (BI-ISIG) of the ACRM (2010)
- Canadian Association of Occupational Therapist Certificate of Appreciation (2010)
- Canadian Association of Occupational Therapist Certificate of Appreciation (2007)
- Canadian Association of Occupational Therapist Award of Merit (2004)
- Chercheur-boursier clinician «Junior 2», Fonds de la recherche en santé du Québec (2003-07)
- Chercheur-boursier clinician «Junior 1», Fonds de la recherche en santé du Québec (2000-03)

Grants/funding history:

- Marshall, S.C. (Co-PI), Bédard, M. (Co-PI), Gélinas, I. (Co-PI), Naglie, G. (Co-PI), Porter, M.M. (Co-PI), Tuokko, H.A. (Co-PI), Vrkljan, B.H. (Co-PI), Gagnon, S., Li, L., Mazer, B., Rapoport, M., Stiell, I., Wells, G. (2014-17). Candrive Prospective Older Driver Study. CIHR (\$462,244).
- Routhier, F., Gélinas, I., St-Amand, Y., Vincent, C. (2013-16). Dispositifs électromécaniques pour commandes à effort minimal dans les véhicules adaptés pour les personnes ayant des incapacités physiques : état de la situation des besoins, des produits et des pratiques au Québec. FRQSC (\$150,000).

- G elinas, I. (Co-PI), Vrkljan, B. (Co-PI), Mazer, B. (Co-PI), Marshall, S., Fleisig, R. (2012-15). Evaluating the on-road performance of older drivers: Innovations to enhance safety. Auto21 Network Centers of Excellence (\$290,089).
- McKerral, M., G elinas, I. (2012-14). Retour   la conduite automobile des personnes traumatis es cr niennes apr s la r adaptation:  valuation des comportements de conduite et de leur dangerosit . FRSQ (\$149,974).
- G elinas, I., Lefebvre, H., Desjardins, M., Kalubi, J-C, Boudreault, P., Pelchat, D., Bouchard, J-M, Michallet, B. (2008-11). Partenariats intra et intersectoriels en r adaptation pour l'inclusion sociale des personnes en situation d'incapacit s. SSHRC (\$158 000).

Research collaboration: One of the most important research-related collaboration that has had a significant impact on my career was joining a pan Canadian group of researchers (Candrive team) with extensive expertise that crosses multiple disciplines who were interested in conducting clinically relevant research on issues related to driving in the elderly. Through a CIHR team grant the Candrive research team has now been working together for almost a decade. Partners from the United States and Australia have more recently joined the group. The team is conducting a multi-center study where we are following a cohort of a 1000 older drivers over 5 years to come up with a clinical decision tool to be able to assess those who may be unsafe drivers. We have recently received a 3-year CIHR grant to continue our work with the cohort. This collaboration has allowed me to learn from colleagues who have different expertise in research and to develop a network that has led to scholarly exchanges and further research collaborations. This has permitted me to conduct projects that address more fully the different facets of my research interests. This successful collaboration has allowed our group to make valuable contributions for health care practitioners and policy makers who aim to enhance the safety and quality-of-life of older drivers in Canada and beyond. In addition, this collaboration has also offered opportunities for my graduate students to learn from experts in the field who have a wide and varied experience and to network with other students across the country.

What is the most important thing in mentoring graduate students? I feel that as mentors of research students we need to provide support and opportunities so they can become well-rounded researchers who can conduct research independently and translate the knowledge to the end users. This can be achieved through role modeling, involving them in a variety of learning and research experiences (conference presentation, opportunities for authorship on manuscripts, involvement in the development of new projects...) and providing venues for exchanges with other researchers and fellow students.

Most significant publications:

- G elinas, I., Gauthier, L., McIntyre, M.C, Gauthier, S. (1999). Development of a functional measure for persons with Alzheimer's disease: The Disability Assessment for Dementia. American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 53: 471-481.
This publication presents the development of a functional measure for individuals who have a dementia of the Alzheimer's type (DAT). It is meant to help clinicians and caregivers make decisions regarding the choice of suitable interventions and to monitor disease progression. In addition, as a research tool, it can be used to describe the functional characteristics of populations with DAT, the course of the disease and also as an outcome variable in intervention studies and clinical trials. The measure has been translated in more than 50 languages and is currently used in clinical practice and as an outcome measure in several international clinical trials.

- Mazer, B., G linas, I., Benoit, D. (2004). Evaluating and Retraining Driving Performance in Clients with Disabilities. Critical Reviews in Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine, 16(4): 293-328.

This publication summarized the literature regarding the clinical and research practices in the continuum of services in driving rehabilitation (from screening to intervention and driving cessation) for adults and elderly with a disability. This publication was a useful reference for health care professionals and researchers in driving rehabilitation to assist them in the choice of assessment tools and training methods.

- Devos, H., Akinwuntan, A.E., G linas, I., George, S., Nieuwboer, A., Verheyden, G. (2012). Shifting up a gear: considerations on assessment and rehabilitation of driving in neurological conditions. Physiotherapy Research International, 17 (3), 125–131, DOI: 10.1002/pri.1535.

This article is the result of an international collaboration and presents an overview of different issues related to driving rehabilitation for individual with a neurological condition. Legislations from various countries, assessment and intervention practices are discussed. A research agenda for driving into the next decennium is proposed.

Tips would you give for new investigators: You will find below some of the tips and resources/support/training programs that I have discovered over the years and which I would recommend to new researchers who want build a successful research career:

- To reserve dedicated time in your schedule for research and writing. There are so many demands in academia related to teaching and administrative activities that can take precedent over research activities if you do not reserve the time for it.
- To take time to think of your long term research plan and set yearly research objectives. This is something that we often do not take the time to do for our research career even though we do it when planning our research projects.
- To learn to say no to certain things so that you can keep your focus on developing your research program.
- To develop early on collaborations with other researchers, including senior researchers who can serve as mentors and guide you in your research career towards the most strategic moves and who can collaborate with you in your grants.
- To establish early on your ‘research lab’. I have found that joining a research group or research center is very useful as it can offer you possibilities for collaboration and also some infrastructure resources as you are trying to develop your research program.
- To get start up funds (from your University or Research Center) to be able to hire a research assistant that can assist in setting up a lab and preparing grants.
- To include your stakeholders in your research from the start, if it is the clinical community, involve clinicians in your research early on.
- To use available resources in your milieu such as librarians, statistician and attend seminars or workshop offered on research topics.