

ACOTUP Researcher Profile

Name of researcher: Jacquie Ripat, University of Manitoba

Degrees and professional qualifications (including fellowships):

PhD, MSc (Rehabilitation), BMR (OT),

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Area of research: The first research area centres on understanding the interaction between people who use assistive technologies and their environments. The intended outcome of this work is to develop and implement ways to better access and use assistive technology, and to modify environments, in order to promote community participation of people with disabilities.

In the second area, research focuses on understanding and facilitating occupational therapists' and occupational therapy students' client-centred development at personal, practice environment, and systems levels.

Grants/funding history:

- Ripat, J. (2012-14). Exploring winter weather issues faced by Manitoba wheeled mobility users. Manitoba Health Research Council Operating Grant (\$78,055).
- Ripat, J., Woodgate, R., Etcheverry, E., Medved, M. (2011-13). Assistive technology and young adults with disabilities. Canadian Institutes for Health Research, Operating Grant (\$130,009).
- Woodgate, R., Ripat, J., Elias, B., Halas, J., Blais, C., & Moffat, M. (2009-11). Unraveling the disability trajectory of first nations families of children with disabilities: advancing Jordan's principle. Canadian Institutes of Health Research New Emerging Teams (\$529,081).
- Ripat, J., & Woodgate, R. (2009-10). Young adults with spinal cord injuries, participation and assistive technology. Manitoba Spinal Cord Injury Research Committee (\$49,070).
- Ripat, J., Redmond, J., Grabowecky, B., & Sador, S. (2006-08). Improving community participation for River East residents by increasing winter walkability. Canadian Centre on Disability Studies (\$5,000).

Research collaboration: One of my most important research collaborations has been with my research mentor Dr. Roberta Woodgate from the Faculty of Nursing at University of Manitoba. I first met Roberta when I took her qualitative research methods course and, subsequently, I enrolled in my doctoral program with Roberta as my advisor. Roberta is an exceptional, renowned and productive qualitative researcher, who generously shares opportunities to engage in research alongside her. She has taught me to see the fun in research and to try to find ways to make research fun and engaging for others. Most importantly, she has taught me to value and cultivate relationships within research, whether with students, research assistants, colleagues, or research participants.

What is the most important thing in mentoring graduate students? Students need to work from a place of passion and interest in a topic. With these key ingredients in place, students take initiative and develop greater ownership of the topic. I try to model excitement and curiosity in my own work and sharing that with students.

Most significant publications: These three publications represent my different areas of research interest. Exploring client-centredness has been an interest since my earlier days as a practicing clinician and has continued throughout my academic career. The Ripat & Woodgate (2012) publication allowed me to draw together concepts that I had been studying. In the Ripat, Redmond & Grabowecky paper, we used a participatory action research (PAR) framework – I learned a lot about the rewards and challenges of PAR through conducting this study!

- Ripat, J., Wener, P., & Dobinson, K. (2013). The development of client-centredness in student occupational therapists. British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 76(5), 217-224.
- Ripat, J. & Woodgate, R. (2012). The role of assistive technology in self-perceived participation. International Journal of Rehabilitation Research, 35(2), 170-177, DOI: 10.1097/MRR.0b013e3283531806.
- Ripat, J., Redmond, J., & Grabowecky, B. (2010). The Winter Walkability project: Occupational therapists' role in promoting citizen engagement. Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy, 77(1), 7-14.

Tips would you give for new researchers: Set a five year plan for your research program. Stage the plan. Start by building your ideas, credibility, and research management with small local grants. Consider how you can build towards provincial and national grants as a target. At the same time, ensure that you are aware of funding opportunities that are only available to you for the short window that you are considered a new investigator.

Try to stagger research activities when managing your day-to-day work. For example, try to have a grant proposal out for review, while collecting/analyzing data in another project, and writing up/presenting the results of another.

Balance saying yes to every exciting opportunity while maintaining focus in your research area. Only say “yes” to those opportunities that will move you farther along your research program (e.g., in terms of networking, research skills, or area of expertise).

Tips would you give for new investigators: Secure one or more excellent research assistants to support the smaller tasks of research. By assigning tasks (literature searches, organizational tasks, etc.), you can free up time to focus on other research activities.

Continue to seek new learning opportunities through research methods training workshops and institutes.

Talk to people from other disciplines about your research and research interests. Your ideas will grow in unique and beneficial ways, and important collaborations will develop!