

The IMID Study

Understanding the effects of stress, anxiety, depression and chronic disease

Welcome!

Did you know?

- In Ancient Greece, the summer solstice marked the start of the New Year
- Pagans believed that evil spirits emerged during the summer solstice. They wore garlands of herbs and flowers to protect themselves against the evil spirits.
- One of the plants they used was St. John's Wort. St. John's wort has been studied as a treatment for mild depression

Welcome to the fifth edition of the IMID study newsletter!

We hope that you are enjoying the summer weather.

In this edition of the newsletter we will share some of our findings related to the ability to work.

We will also introduce two other members of our research team.

We hope you enjoy it.

Study progress...

We are entering the final year of the study.

By the end of April 2018, 100 participants will have completed their final study visits— THANK YOU.

See page 3 for some of the new findings related to this study. Previous findings that we have shared with you have contributed to 12 publications and multiple presentations that have been shared with the scientific community and health care providers.

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Meet the research team: Dr. James Bolton

Where are you from?

I was born and raised in Winnipeg. After finishing high school I studied at McGill University then at the University of Western Ontario. I returned to Winnipeg to finish my training in Psychiatry.

What do you hope to learn from this study?

...I am very excited to

be involved in this study. I find the connection between the brain and the body extremely interesting. I hope to learn more about how these immune conditions and mental conditions are related; so we can better understand both types of interest. This will help health care providers to better

identify and treat people with autoimmune and psychiatric illnesses.

What other research are you involved in?

I focus on suicide prevention. I am involved in studies looking at risk factors and factors that protect against suicide.



James Bolton, MD

Meet the research team: Caitlin Blaney, PhD student

Where are you from?

... Toronto. I completed a Bachelor of Sciences Degree in Neuroscience at Dalhousie University in Halifax.

What are you studying?

I am completing my PhD in clinical psychology, at the University of Manitoba. My dissertation focuses on the relationship between anxiety and health outcomes in people with rheuma-

toid arthritis. First, I want to understand more about anxiety symptoms in people with RA including the pattern of when those symptoms develop and how they change over time. Then I want to see how this relates to symptoms of RA such as joint swelling, pain and fatigue. Second, I want to test a way to treat anxiety in people with RA. I am going to

test how well an online cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) program works.

What other research are you involved in?

I have been involved with research looking at post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and physical health conditions. I am also involved in projects looking at personality dysfunction.



Caitlin Blaney, BSc

Findings on Ability to Work in the IMID Study

What question were we trying to answer?

We wanted to look at the ability to work in people with IBD, MS, RA and depression or anxiety.

What aspects of work ability did we look at?

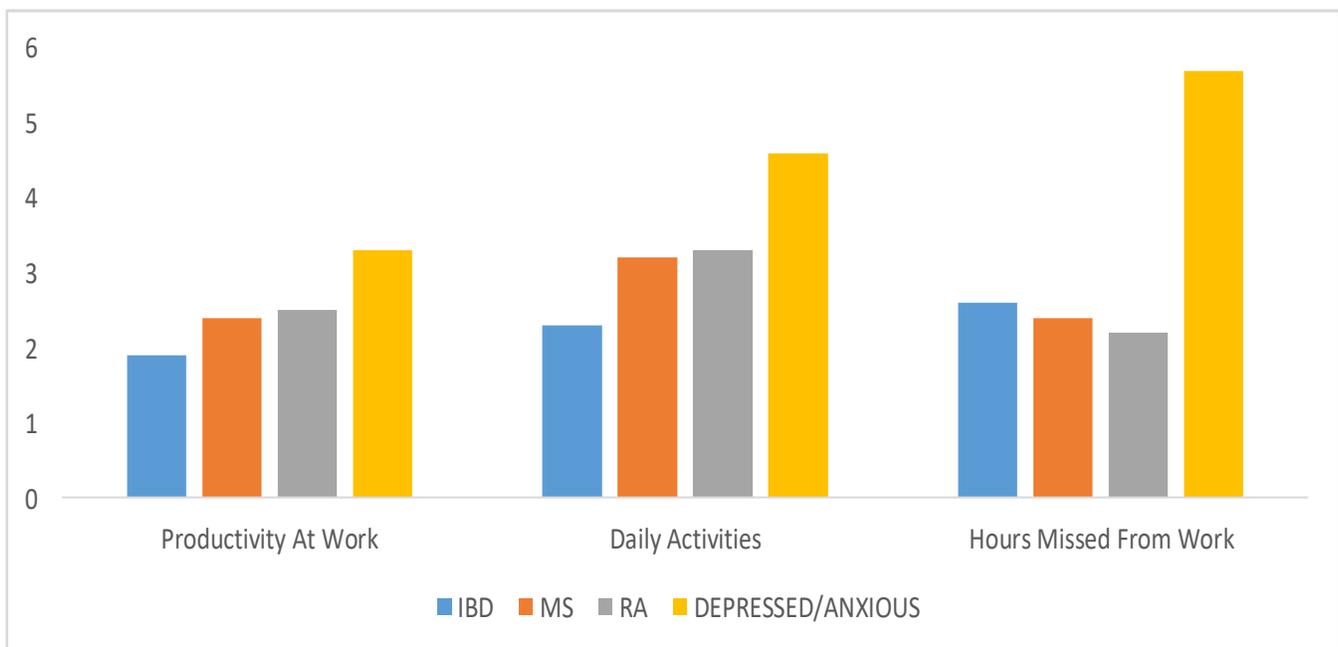
Specifically, we focused on whether these conditions affect the amount of time people miss work (i.e. absenteeism), or how well they perform when they are at work (i.e. presenteeism).

What did we find?

Among participants aged 18-64 years, over 40% of people in each of the study groups are employed.



Participants who were currently employed rated the impact of their health on the ability to be productive at work and on their ability to perform daily activities on a scale from 0 (no impact) to 10. They also reported and hours missed from work. As you can see below, all participant groups reported that their health affected their ability to work and daily activities to some degree. Next, we plan to look at whether symptoms of pain, fatigue, depression and anxiety affect these find-



The Gut and Immune Diseases

Researchers are increasingly interested in the role of the gut microbiome in health and disease.

What is the gut microbiome?

Our gut has trillions of micro-organisms, mainly bacteria. These bacteria and their genetic material make up the gut microbiome. The gut microbiome is diverse—that is, it has many different types of bacteria, like mixed forests have many different types of trees.

What is the Human Microbiome Project?

The Human Microbiome Project was a 5-year project that started in 2008. The project was funded by the National Institutes of Health (in the United States). The project had several goals, one of which was to explore how changes in the microbiome relate to disease.

What about the gut microbiome in diseases like IBD, MS and RA?

Sometimes the number and types of bacteria in the gut are altered. This is referred to as ‘gut dysbiosis’. Researchers think that gut dysbiosis may affect the immune system in the gut and the rest of the body, and that this may play a role in causing immune-mediated diseases. Studies in people with IBD consistently show changes in the gut microbiome. That is, the microbiome is less diverse. Some bacteria are less common than usual, while others are more common.

What about the gut microbiome in depression?

Researchers have also shown that the gut microbiome is altered in depression.

Could changing the gut microbiome affect the severity or symptoms of immune diseases or depression?

This is a really important question. Researchers are studying whether probiotics can affect health by changing the gut microbiome. We do not know enough yet to use probiotics as a treatment for IBD, MS or RA, but this may change in the future.

Research Study Coordinators

Nicholas Hall

Julia Rempel

Caitlin McFadyen

Janet Yuen

Have suggestions for the newsletter? Feel free to contact us. If your contact information changes, please let us know.

Thanks for your continued participation !

Phone: 204-787-4778

Alt Phone: 204-787-2942

Email: IMID@hsc.mb.ca



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Enjoy the rest of the summer!

