

## The IMID Study

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

## Welcome!

### Did you know?

- The first day of the summer solstice this year was June 20, 2017
- Seasonal affective disorder is a form of depression that is triggered by changes in the seasons
- Exposure to sunlight may increase the brain's release of serotonin.
- Serotonin is a brain chemical involved in mood.

*Welcome to the third edition of the IMID study newsletter!*

We hope that you are enjoying the summer season.

In this edition of the newsletter we will share some preliminary findings about pain, stress and fatigue among participants in the IMID study. We also share

some research findings from another aspect of the study, as well as some general interest news items.

We will also introduce another member of our research team.

We hope you enjoy it.

## Who is participating in this study?

We completed enrolling participants in July 2016. Over three-quarters of participants have completed their second visit. Over one-tenth of participants have completed their third visit. We are very grateful by people's willingness to join the study and stick with it over the years. Below we tell you something about participants in each group.

### Inside this issue:

Stress, pain and fatigue	2
An interview with the research team	3
In the news	3
Contact information	4
Diet and depression	4

	IBD	MS	RA	Depressed/Anxious
Females	63%	81%	84%	77%
Average age	47	51	59	44
Currently depressed	8%	10%	11%	28%
Currently anxious	18%	14%	19%	64%

## Comparing levels of stress, pain and fatigue across groups

We have started to compare levels of stress, pain and fatigue across the groups of participants in this study. As a starting point we have focused on severe levels of these symptoms.

### What did we find?

Severe stress, pain and fa-

tigue were fairly common in all groups (Figure 1).

A greater percentage of people in the depressed/anxious group reported severe stress and severe fatigue than in people in any other group. The percentage of people who reported severe pain was also higher in

the depressed/anxious group than in the other groups BUT severe pain was nearly as common in people with RA.

The frequency of severe stress, pain and fatigue level was similar in men and women (Figure 2).

Figure 1.

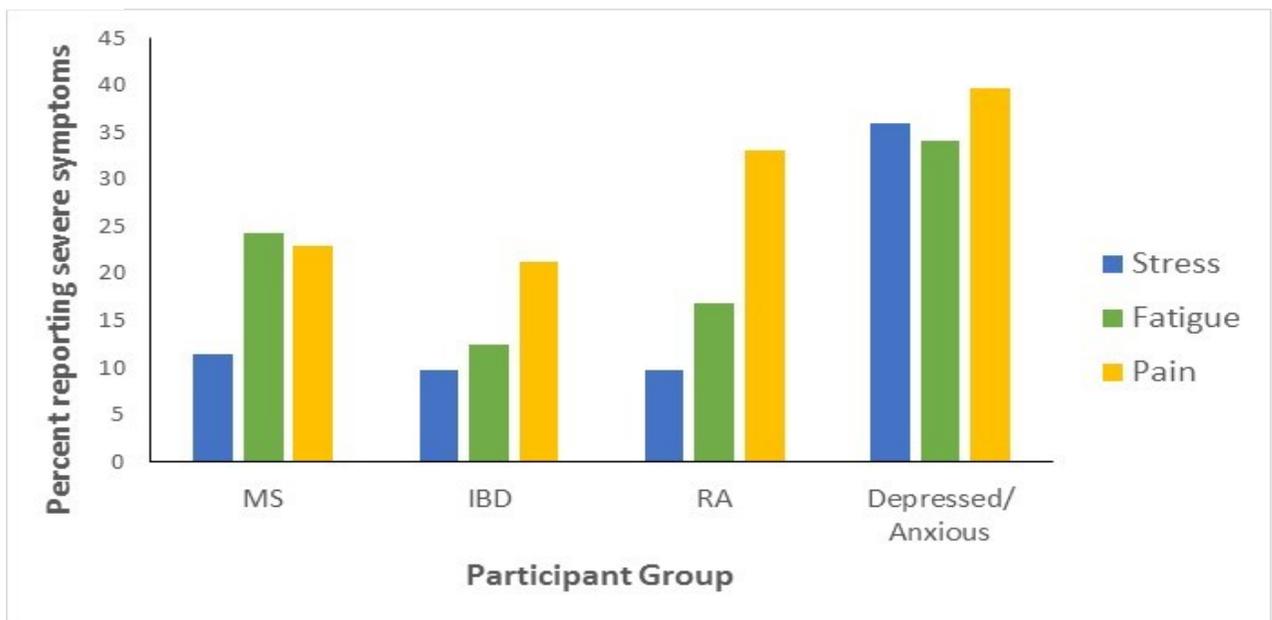
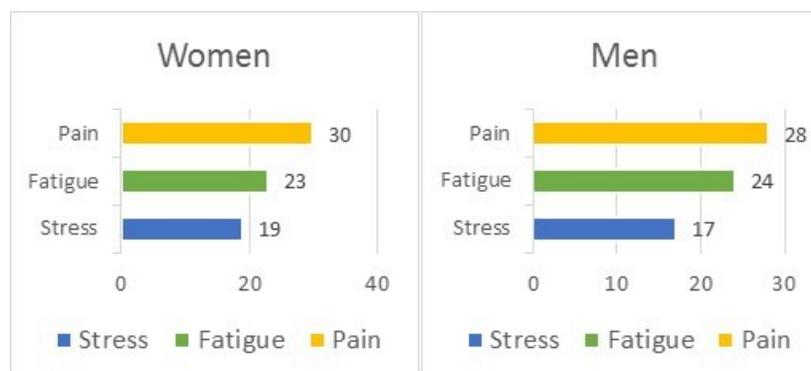


Figure 2.



## Meet the research team: Dr. Alex Singer

### *Where are you from?*

...Toronto. I moved to Winnipeg to complete my family medicine residency. Now I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Manitoba.

### *What is your role in the IMID study?*

...I am a co-investigator. I ensure the study findings are relevant to primary care providers.

### *What do you hope to learn from this study?*

...Enhance my research skills. I hope we will develop better tools to help people with multiple health conditions.

### *What other research are you involved in?*

I am the Network Director of the Manitoba Primary Care Research Network, a large Canadian collaboration that uses information on primary care drawn from electronic medical records. We aim to improve primary care.



Alex Singer, MD  
Co-Investigator

## In the news

Dr. Bernstein presented new findings from the IMID study at the Digestive Diseases Week annual meeting in Chicago in early May. Using anonymous health service use in-

formation for residents of Manitoba, he found that people with IBD were 47% more likely to have a diagnosis of depression before they were diagnosed with IBD than

people without IBD of the same age and sex. People with IBD were also 22% more likely to have a diagnosis of anxiety disorder before they were diagnosed than people without IBD.

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### *Did you know?*

*There are two main forms of IBD: Crohn's disease & ulcerative colitis*

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## More news

Dr. El-Gabalawy, a co-investigator in the IMID study, and colleagues recently found that mood affects other symptoms in people with arthritis. Participants in the study

included 148 people with early inflammatory arthritis. Each year these individuals reported their symptoms of depression, anxiety, pain and fatigue.

Fatigue was associated

with depression and anxiety. Increasing symptoms of anxiety and depression over time were associated with pain, fatigue, and severity of joint symptoms.

These findings were presented at the American College of Rheumatology meeting in November.

Research Study Coordinators

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

*Thanks for your continued participation !*

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## Improved diet to help with depression?

A healthy diet is important to maintain many aspects of health. Researchers in Australia & New Zealand conducted a clinical trial to test whether **adding a diet intervention to usual care** would help moderate to severe depression. Jacka et al. BMC Medicine 2017; 15:23

### *What was the intervention (treatment)?*

Group 1 (33 people). **Personalized dietary advice & counseling from a clinical dietitian.** The focus was on improving diet quality by:

- ◆ increasing consumption of whole grains, vegetables, fruit, legumes, low-fat and unsweetened dairy foods, raw and unsalted nut, fish, lean red meats, chicken, eggs and olive oil
- ◆ decreasing intake of sweets, refined cereals, fried food, fast food, processed meats and sugary drinks

Group 2 (34 people). **Social support:** research assistants spent time discussing topics like sports or music that were of interest to the participant, or played cards or board games.

### *What did they find?*

Participants in the diet group showed improvements in diet quality AND their symptoms of depression decreased much more than in the support group

**Limitations:** Small study which was only 12 weeks long but a promising area for further research.

**Related work:** In MS there are several ongoing clinical trials testing diets as treatments.