

MacART launches a new website for autism research

Hamilton, ON (September 20, 2016) – The latest team to join Hamilton’s thriving research community is establishing its online presence with an innovative, user-friendly website. The site, which is designed to inform, educate, and raise awareness, will be the primary communication tool for MacART, the McMaster Autism Research Team.

MacART is a partnership between McMaster Children’s Hospital Research Collaborative, Hamilton Health Sciences, and McMaster University, that aims to bridge the research-to-practice gap in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Driven by the clearly defined mission of ‘advancing autism care through meaningful research’ MacART’s approach to research is notably different in two respects.

Firstly, a collective of more than 30 leading researchers from 10 departments and five research centres will collaborate with top-level, developmental pediatricians, psychiatrists, psychologists, and therapists from the Autism Spectrum Disorder Clinic at the Ron Joyce Children’s Health Centre, to move research findings from the laboratory to the clinic, and clinical experience back to the laboratory. This is a precedent-setting approach, with researchers and clinicians systematically working together to design and implement more meaningful research.

The second unique feature of MacART is its diverse group of stakeholders.

The collaborative environment extends beyond labs and clinics to include parents, caregivers, persons with ASD, educators and policymakers. In fact, stakeholder engagement is the foundation of MacART’s four pillars of autism care – Research, Education, Community, and Policy.

The website will play a key role in connecting this broad and diverse group of stakeholders. “The MacART website provides a trusted space for knowledge exchange and communication between our researchers, clinicians, and autism stakeholders; it reflects, in a transparent way, the collaborative process of advancing autism care through meaningful research,” explains Dr. Stelios Georgiades, MacART Founder and Co-Director.

Parents of children with autism form some of Ontario’s most effective advocacy groups and, even though there are some excellent resources online, the internet can be daunting for families trying to find credible information about ASD research. “[MacART’s] vision speaks to this very real need to bridge the gap between autism research and multi-stakeholder engagement and particularly, community,” said parent advocate, James Mitchell. “...I commend the efforts and recognize the newness of the venture and see much potential to really be a significant force in bridging autism research and the community.”

To learn more about MacART's unique approach to autism care, please visit www.macautism.ca.

About HHS Research, MCH, and McMaster Research

Hamilton Health Sciences, in affiliation with McMaster University Faculty of Health Sciences, is home to one of the most research-intensive environments for medical research in Canada. More than 450 researchers conduct multidisciplinary research through a series of institutes, centres, and research groups, as well as individual investigations. To learn more about HHS Research, please visit www.hhsresearchadmin.ca

The McMaster Children's Hospital and the Ron Joyce Children's Health Centre are part of the Hamilton Health Sciences family of six hospital sites and six specialized healthcare facilities. Hamilton Health Sciences is the second largest hospital group in the province serving more than 2.3 million residents of Hamilton and south-central Ontario. For more information, visit www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca.

Established in 2012 the McMaster Children's Hospital Research Collaborative (MCHRC) is supported by the Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation and McMaster Children's Hospital. The MCHRC provides operating grants to both established research programs, emerging research areas and supports five research chairs in partnership with McMaster University. For more information, visit <http://mcmasterchildrenshospital.ca/research/index.html>

McMaster University is consistently rated among the top one hundred institutions in the world for the quality and breadth of its research enterprise, for the discoveries and scholarly contributions of its faculty, and for the excellence of its research programs. To learn more about McMaster University, visit www.mcmaster.ca

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