

**Evaluating the implementation
and impact of an online tool used
within primary care to improve the
income security of patients with
complex health and social needs
in Ontario and Manitoba**

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Background

- **Poverty is a key health issue:** poor Canadians experience shorter lives, higher rates of chronic disease, less access to health care
- Poverty is a health system issue and predicts **high health system use**
- Many poor Canadians **don't access financial benefits** they are entitled to



Evidence-based interventions to address social determinants in clinical care are needed^{1,2}

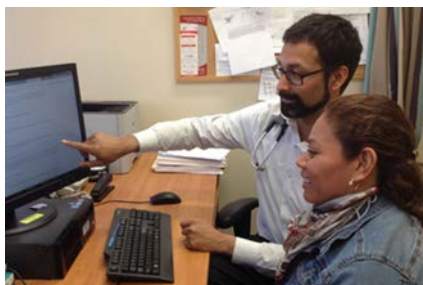
1. Andermann, Anne. "Taking action on the social determinants of health in clinical practice: a framework for health professionals." *Cmaj: Canadian Medical Association journal= journal de l'association medicale canadienne* (2016).
2. Kiran, Tara, and Andrew D. Pinto. "Swimming 'upstream' to tackle the social determinants of health." (2016): 138-140.



Objectives

- **Develop new knowledge** on how to address SDOH in clinical settings
- **Evaluate implementation** of an online tool as intervention on a key SDOH
- Help providers screen patients income security and guide patients to appropriate resources
- Assess perspectives on use of online tool in primary care
- **Use findings to modify new online tool for future use**





http://www.stmichaelshospital.com/media/detail.php?source=hospital_news/2016/0727

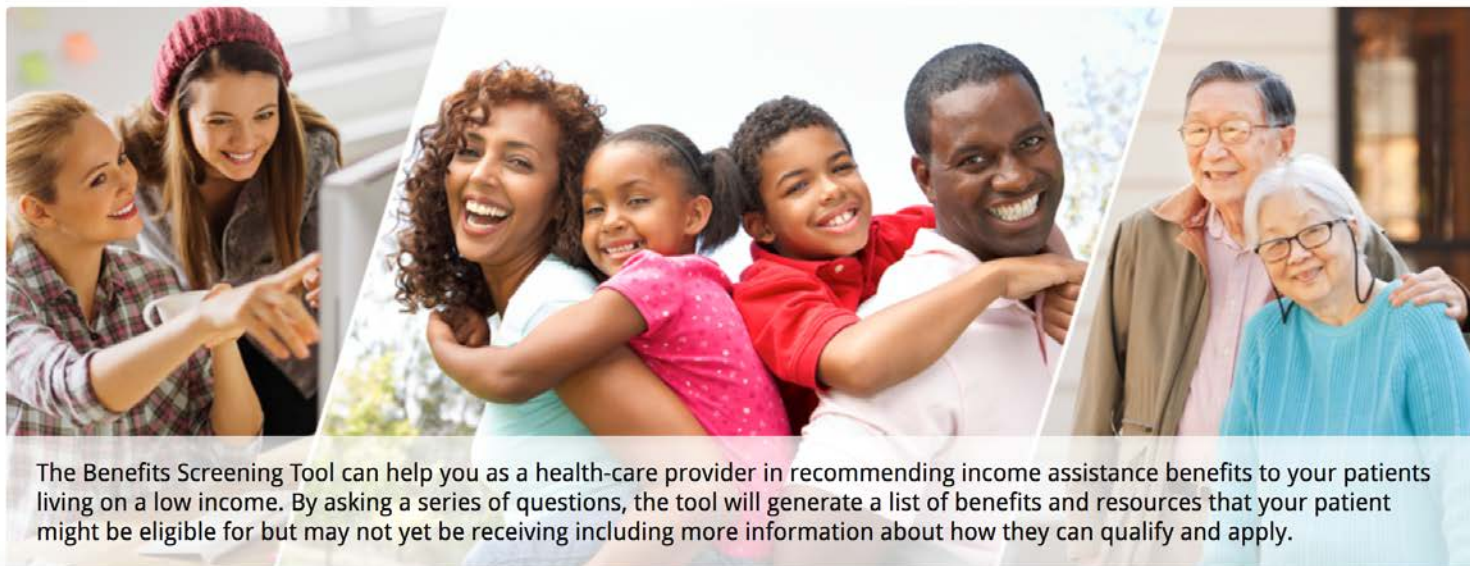
Methods

- **7 sites** enrolled (3 in Toronto, 4 in Winnipeg)
- **Pragmatic implementation** of the tool
- **Multiple sources** of data:
 - Surveys of patients and providers
 - Focus groups at each site
 - Telephone interview with patients at 1 month



Benefits Screening Tool

Supporting primary health-care providers in improving the health and income security of patients living in poverty



The Benefits Screening Tool can help you as a health-care provider in recommending income assistance benefits to your patients living on a low income. By asking a series of questions, the tool will generate a list of benefits and resources that your patient might be eligible for but may not yet be receiving including more information about how they can qualify and apply.



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We have recommendations for your patient

Ontario Works

Ontario Works (OW)

Ontario Works (OW) helps people who are in temporary financial need. The amount of money you may receive from OW will depend on your family size, income, assets, and housing costs. If you already receive OW, you may be eligible for additional related benefits, which are listed below the information about OW.

This program offers financial assistance, including income support to help with the costs of basic needs and health benefits, and also employment assistance to help clients find, prepare for and keep a job.

Am I eligible?

To be eligible for Ontario Works, you must:

- live in Ontario
- need money right away to help pay for food and shelter, and
- be willing to take part in activities that will help you find a job.

How do I get it?

There are three ways you can apply for Ontario Works:

1. Online using the Online Application for Social Assistance;



Conclusions

- Tools that bridge gaps between health services and social services put into practice our understanding of the bio-psycho-social roots of acute and chronic diseases, including depression, diabetes, COPD, HIV and chronic pain
- Why does this matter?
 - We are in a better position than ever to act on rich sources of data on social causes of health outcomes
- Future interventions (SPARK Study) will compare moderate versus intensive follow-up in respects to connecting patients with increased incomes



Thank you 😊

QUESTIONS?

Learn more:

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