



Letter of Initial Contact: Phase One - Caregivers

CanWheel Project 1

“Evaluating the needs and experiences of older adults using power wheelchairs”

Principal Investigators:

Dr. Laura Hurd Clarke, University of British Columbia
Dr. Alex Mihailidis, Toronto Rehab

Co-Investigators:

Dr. Rosalie Wang, Toronto Rehab Post-Doctoral Trainee
Dr. William C. Miller, UBC Associate Professor
Alex Korotchenko, UBC PhD Candidate
Krista Best, UBC PhD Student

Dear Sir/ Madam,

We are writing this letter to invite you to participate in a research study that is being carried out at the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute. This study is investigating the effectiveness, impact and relevance of wheeled mobility devices from the perspective of consumers, caregivers, health care providers, and funding agencies. To date, we have little comprehensive understanding of the wheelchair use, needs or experiences of older wheelchair users. Failing to account for consumers' opinions has been cited as one of the primary reasons for device abandonment and poor device satisfaction. Despite over 30 years of development, there are almost no wheelchairs with smart technology on the market today. This may reflect insufficient technological capability, and/or a mismatch between the individual's skill and the wheelchair technology (lack of universal design). Our goal in this project is to collect information to help us to create a useful, usable wheelchair technology that follows principles of universal design (i.e., equitable, flexible, easy to use, and well-matched for a broad range of older Canadians).

You are a potential participant for this study because you are a caregiver of a wheelchair user aged 50 years or older; spouse, family member, close friend, or paid caregiver hired directly by a wheelchair user; 19 years old or over; and able to communicate in English.

Taking part in this study involves an interview with the study co-investigators about power wheelchairs and your daily experiences of power wheelchairs as a caregiver.

If you choose to participate, you may refuse to answer any questions and/ or withdraw from the study at any time. Your identity and all information you provide will be kept strictly confidential at all times.

If you are interested in participating in the study or if you would like additional information, please contact Rosalie Wang, study coordinator, at (416) 946-8573.

Sincerely,



Rosalie Wang, OT(C), PhD
Study Coordinator
Toronto Rehabilitation Institute