



Aging Research News



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR RESEARCH VOLUNTEERS OF THE ADULT VOLUNTEER POOL

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

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23RD EDITION

Thank you to all of our research volunteers!

We would like to extend our thanks to all of our volunteers and to share with you some information about the studies you may have recently participated in. Since our humble beginnings at the start of the century, the Adult Volunteer Pool volunteer program has now grown to include over 5000 active volunteers who have participated in close to 400 different studies. Your time and commitment has been an invaluable contribution to the progress of our research.

Over the past several years, our research has focused on various aspects of cognition (e.g., memory, learning), social attitudes, and more recently, neuropsychology as people grow older. On many occasions, you have asked us about our research and the results that we have obtained. While it has often been too early for us to answer those questions definitively, we have tried to summarize some of our results in this newsletter (see reverse). We hope that this newsletter will provide you with a better understanding of our research and our department's contribution to the field of psychology, and that you will find it to be as interesting as we do.

We are continuously looking for new volunteers to participate. If you have any friends or family between the ages of 50 and 80 who would be interested in becoming research volunteers, please have them contact us. Please also call us if you have recently moved, changed phone numbers, or believe your personal information has changed. Once again, we would like to thank you and hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter.

Directions to the Psychology Department

- To 100 St. George St. from the St. George subway station:

Exit through the St. George St. exit (not the Bedford Rd. exit). Turn left and walk south on St. George St. past Bloor St. and Harbord St. The building will be on your right.

Aging Research News is designed to keep our volunteers up to date on news and research at the University of Toronto. Questions or comments can be addressed to:

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FACULTY PROFILE

Dr. F. Craik: Attention and Memory Laboratory



By general agreement I am finally approaching retirement age, and as a result my lab operations have been reduced recently when compared to previous years. My long-time assistant Karen Li departed to take a position that was more in the line that she wishes to pursue. She was followed by Lisa Chan for a brief spell and then by my current assistant Eldar Eftekhari who so far is staying the course! We have nevertheless completed some reasonably large studies in this last time period. We have been giving a short test called 'alpha span' to many volunteers; this consists of presenting short lists of words, asking the participant to rearrange the words mentally and then give them back in correct alphabetic order. This task measures verbal working memory and we have found that performance declines from the 20s to the 80s. We have submitted a paper giving norms for ages between 20 and 80, and also commenting on the variables that affect performance. In addition, we have completed a study on the relations between executive functions and memory retrieval in a group of older adults, and are currently running an experiment on young adults exploring the effects of divided attention on memory following different types of initial processing. We are pondering the results of these recent studies and plan to write them up in the near future.

Do you have any feedback on your experience with us today?

If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in today's experiment, please contact the Adult Volunteer Pool by phone or email (see front), or visit our website at

www.psych.utoronto.ca/users/adultpool

