



# Aging Research News



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR RESEARCH VOLUNTEERS OF THE ADULT VOLUNTEER POOL

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

FALL - WINTER 2017-18

26TH 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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**c/o Adult Volunteer Pool**  
**University of Toronto**  
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**Web:** [www.psych.utoronto.ca/users/adultpool](http://www.psych.utoronto.ca/users/adultpool)

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# FACULTY PROFILE

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## Dr. J. Pratt: Visual Cognition Lab



There is much more information available in a person's visual field than their brain can process at any given moment. Because of this, the process of selecting what visual information enters the brain is critical in our ability to successfully interact with our environments. In the Visual Cognition Lab, we are interested in understanding the process of selecting visual information for further processing in the brain. Recently, we have been studying how visual information is carried by two different pathways in the brain. One pathway carries information to the parts of the brain that control actions, such as moving our eyes and our hands, while the other pathway carries information to the brain areas that identify and recognize objects. Our studies have shown

that if an image of an object is presented near the hands, there is more activity in the action pathway, while if the image is presented far from the hands, there is more activity in the object recognition pathway. We are currently examining if this bias in activity due to hand position, which has been found in young adult observers, also occurs in older adults. If this study indicates that the manner in which visual information is processed in the brain does change over the years, it may be possible to design environments which provide the type of visual information that older adults process most effectively.

### 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](http://www.psych.utoronto.ca/users/adultpool)

