

# Introduction: OPTIMUM A Research Study

## Background

One-half or more of older adults who are experiencing depression, fail to remit with antidepressant pharmacotherapy. Treatment-resistant depression (TRD) in older adults is highly deleterious, because persistence of depression is a leading cause of disability, suicide, dementia, and premature mortality. Making it worse is the lack of evidence-supported treatments at a stage in life when medications' benefit vs. risk ratio is crucial.

## Objectives

The Optimizing Outcomes of Treatment-Resistant Depression in Older Adults A (OPTIMUM A) study will provide the evidence that older adults need to get effective treatment that works best for them, improving their quality of life while minimizing risks of medications.

## Methodology

Participants will be non-demented older adults aged 60+, with equal proportions aged 60-70 and 70+, with current major depression that has failed to respond to 2+ adequate antidepressant trials. We will recruit across five regions: St. Louis and rural Missouri; Los Angeles City and County; Western Pennsylvania; New York City; and Toronto and rural Ontario.

## Potential Impact

This study offers providers the opportunity to learn how to more effectively treat depressed older patients and learn state-of-the-art science prescribing practices by receiving treatment recommendations from trained study psychiatrists and mental health referrals for ineligible patients. Moreover, the study offers regular decision-support from geriatric psychiatrists that is specific to each patient.

This study is a true partnership: both providers and patients will be reimbursed for their time and expenses related to participating in the study.

## Learn More

In conjunction with the start of the study, a webinar for all AFHTO members on improving care for elderly patients with depression will be given by **Dr. Peter Selby**, Clinician Scientist in the Addictions Division and the Director of Medical Education at CAMH, and **Dr. Benoit Mulsant**, Professor of Geriatric Psychiatry and Chair of the Psychiatry Department at the University of Toronto.

- **Registration link:** <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2351169659001167107>
- **For further information, contact Kyle Fitzgibbon:** 1-866-539-3510, ext. 7;  
[kyle.fitzgibbon@camh.ca](mailto:kyle.fitzgibbon@camh.ca)