



September 25, 2023

Re: Dr. Gary Groot's nomination for College of Medicine Annual Excellence in Research Award

To Whom It May Concern:

College of Medicine Annual Excellence in Research Award

As Faculty Members in the Departments of Community Health and Epidemiology (Dr. Tracey Carr) and Department of Psychology and Health Studies (Dr. Valery Chirkov) at the University of Saskatchewan, we are pleased to nominate Dr. Gary Groot for the College of Medicine Annual Excellence in Research Award.

Dr. Groot has numerous accomplishments in research funding, academic publications, and technical reports. He has also strongly contributed to the promotion and utilization of the innovative Realist health research methodology in evaluation and health research. Dr. Groot's engagement with the health system and community stakeholders reflects his leadership style and is a significant indicator of his research excellence and commitment to advancing the field. In his research and community work, Dr. Groot emphasizes the integration of equity, diversity and inclusivity by focusing on establishing meaningful partnerships with Aboriginal communities to improve the health of Indigenous Peoples. Because of our long-standing and productive relationships with Dr. Groot, we can attest to his excellence in health research and how he greatly deserves the College of Medicine Annual Excellence in Research Award. Therefore, we are pleased to nominate him for this award.

Research Funding

In the past two years alone, as a Principal Investigator, Dr. Groot has acquired over 7 million dollars in research grants and acted as a Co-investigator on a 20 million dollar pan-Canadian grant. These competitions have included CIHR *Transforming Health with Integrated Care (THINC) - Implementation Science Teams Grant*, CIHR *Project Grant*, SCPOR/CIHR/SHRF *Learning Health Systems Grant* and *Canadian Cancer Society Action and Accelerator Grants*. This research success is a testament to Dr. Groot's ability to lead interdisciplinary teams and engage with health system and community stakeholders in meaningful ways.

Publications and Technical Reports

Dr. Groot has a strong publication record, with 11 first author articles and 42 last author articles in the past academic year. In addition, he has co-authored 20 publications in the last year. Many of these articles represent national and international collaborations in clinical, community health, and health system journals. In authoring 20 technical reports for provincial government, First Nations, Métis, Saskatchewan Health Authority, and the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, Dr. Groot has translated research findings into actionable recommendations for patients, communities, and health systems.



Realist Research Methodology

Dr. Groot has also shown leadership and made a significant contribution to health research due to his dedicated efforts and contributions to promoting and expanding Realist Research at the University of Saskatchewan. Dr. Groot has trained and is currently supervising three post-doctoral students who are using realist paradigm as the foundation of their research projects. He also co-developed a graduate-level course “Introduction to Critical Realism, its Methodology, and Application” through the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology. In doing so, Dr. Groot has furthered the reach and impact of the Realist approach and situated the University of Saskatchewan as a key contributor to the widescale advancement of this paradigm. Dr. Groot demonstrates passion for transmitting his knowledge of emerging and existing research methods. His innovative approach to methodology demonstrates positive long-term effects on health research that promotes people’s overall health and well-being, and these efforts are commendable and deserve of acknowledgement.

Leadership Style

Dr. Groot’s style of values-based leadership is grounded in integrity, self-awareness, humility, empathy, and respect. Dr. Groot is a self-motivated leader who is also self-aware of his own biases and privileges. He has built a strong research team and fostered a safe and productive work environment for professional development that upholds equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. Dr. Groot possesses strong communication skills, which successful drive his prolific research agenda. His passion for health system improvement, cancer research, and First Nations and Metis health research conducted in partnership with Indigenous Peoples and communities inspires both his staff and students.

At the outset of the pandemic, Dr. Groot spearheaded the COVID-19 Evidence Support Team (CEST), which went on to play an instrumental role in the province’s response to COVID-19. This pilot study demonstrated the benefit of rapid learning infrastructure to facilitate a Learning Health System (LHS) in the province. Dr. Groot has also collaborated with McMaster University in a national CIHR-funded initiative, CanCOVID. CanCOVID has provided expertise and guidance nationally for rapid evidence reviews that are paving the way for application to the general healthcare system in an LHS manner.

As a result of Dr. Groot’s collaboration with clinicians, patient partners, and policy makers, a Long COVID Working Group report led to the development of LHS proposals to complement the Long COVID pathway being developed in SK. A grant led by Dr. Groot to develop nationally accepted patient reported measurements as well as a nationwide patient portal was funded by a national SPOR initiative. Recently, Dr. Groot was a Co-Principal Investigator on 20 million pan-Canadian CIHR grant to investigate Long COVID. All initiatives include the involvement of early-career researchers, medical trainees, and graduate students.

Commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research

As is evident in his many research endeavours, Dr. Groot is committed to improve cancer care for the Indigenous Peoples of Saskatchewan. He also has modelled the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Calls to Action. Dr. Groot projects a practice of cultural humility, which promotes change in his research group. In addition, Dr. Groot has continuously encouraged and supported innovation for



equitable health outcomes. He championed improvement in health equity access to and delivery of care through both his clinical and research work, informing policies for healthy organizations.

In his unique position as a clinician-scientist, Dr. Groot integrates the results of his research into clinical practice and shares these with others in a collegial way. Dr. Groot has worked to improve the province's health equity by leading and collaborating on projects that span the continuum of cancer care for Indigenous Peoples. Specifically, he operates in a culturally responsive manner through the research process, from defining research priorities to delivering care across the cancer journey and support in survivorship. His work alongside Elders, knowledge keepers, Indigenous patient partners, and community members has strategically aligned decisions with vision, values, and evidence that resulted in tangible systemic improvements in cancer care for Indigenous Peoples.

Dr. Groot continues to purposefully build research partnerships and networks to create a change in health outcomes for Indigenous Peoples. Dr. Groot is currently the lead investigator on two Canadian Cancer Society funded projects that are examining the impact of cultural continuity with Métis health and wellbeing for cancer prevention. This project has produced knowledge translation materials that connect culture, health promotion and disease prevention for Métis Peoples.

We are honored to nominate Dr. Groot for the College of Medicine Research Excellence Award. In our view, Dr. Groot has made significant provincial, national, and international health research impacts. He continues to orient himself strategically to the future, scanning the healthcare system for innovative ideas and best practices. Dr. Groot's research has positively impacted Saskatchewan patients, families, and communities. Overall, Dr. Gary Groot has taken a leadership role in increasing equitable access to medical care and improving the quality of health care for all Canadians and will continue to make meaningful contributions to health research in the future.

Tracey Carr, PhD
Assistant Professor
Department of Community Health & Epidemiology
Treaty 6 territory and Métis homeland
University of Saskatchewan
Room 3248, E-Wing Health Science Building
107 Wiggins Road, Saskatoon, SK S7N 5E5
Ph: (306) 966 7973
Email: tracey.carr@usask.ca

Valery Chirkov, Ph.D.
Professor
Department of Psychology and Health Studies
9 Campus Drive,
Saskatoon, SK S7N 5A5
Ph: (306) 966-6529
Email: v.chirkov@usask.ca