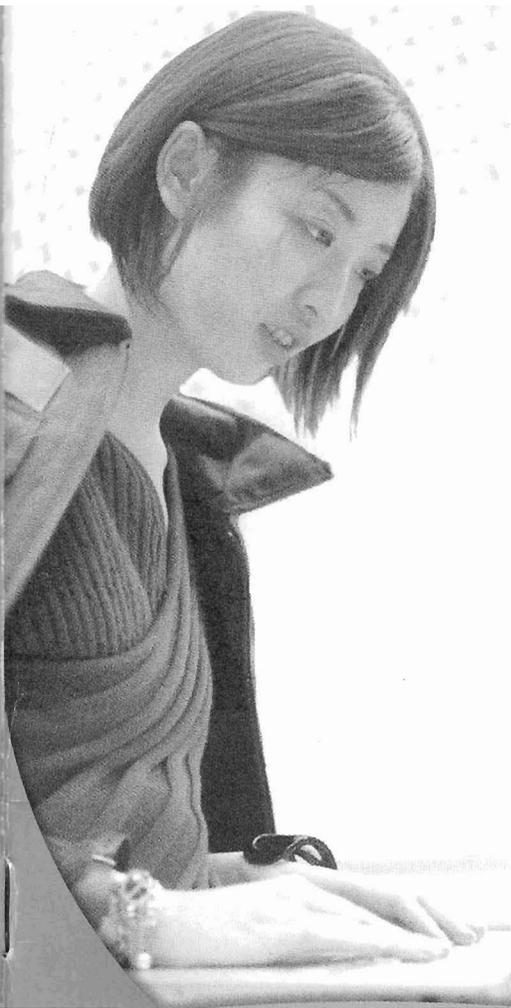


centre for

health studies



Showcase  
2007

TRENT UNIVERSITY 

## Table of Contents

<b>Welcome to Showcase 2007</b> <i>Deborah Kennett, Director</i>	1
<b>A New Look at An Old Plague</b> <i>Ian C. Storey &amp; Ian McIntyre</i>	4
<b>Why Love Matters to Our Physical Health</b> <i>Elaine Scharfe &amp; Nicole Black</i>	6
<b>Dreams and Health: Examining the Connection</b> <i>David B. King</i>	8
<b>On Time and Chronic Illness: A Phenomenological Study of Diabetes</b> <i>David Morris</i>	10
<b>Canadian Mortality Data in the Age of Delayed Degenerative Diseases</b> <i>Beryl Cable-Williams</i>	12
<b>Some Ethical Dilemmas in the Distribution of Health Care</b> <i>Jo Anne Colson</i>	14
<b>The Paradox of Volunteer Caregiving in the Countryside</b> <i>Mark Skinner</i>	16
<b>A Death of a Thousand Cuts: How Private Profit Seeks to Destabilize Public Medicare Systems</b> <i>Rory Coughlan</i>	18
<b>Medicines Proliferation: Reflections on a Sociology of Pharmaceutical Health Care</b> <i>Peri Ballantyne</i>	20
<b>Second Annual Student Health Day</b>	22
<b>Members List 2007</b>	23
<b>Coming Events</b>	24

## Welcome to Showcase 2007

*Directo*

**W**elcome to *Showcase 2007*, featuring summaries of presentations from the Fifth Annual Health Studies Day held in January 2007. This year, professor **Dr. Ian Storey** and undergraduate student **Ian McIntyre** of Ancient History and Classics began the day's sessions by taking us way back in time to around 430 BC and the outbreak of the Athens' plague. They discuss the evidence that amassed from a 1994 excavating site, implicating typhoid fever as the probable cause of this plight.

Bringing us back to the 21st century, psychology professor **Dr. Elaine Scharfe** and nursing student, **Nicole Black**, highlight the importance of having secure attachment relationships beginning even as early as prenatally. They examine the association between attachment and health, using mothers' prenatal attachment reports and reports of their infants' health over the first 6 months.

Connecting dreams with health, **David King**, a master's candidate of the Modelling in the Natural and Social Sciences graduate program, describes his research with **Dr. Teresa DeCicco**. Striking relationships between physical and mental daily health with dream imagery content are revealed in their research, suggesting that if we review the information contained in our dreams that this may provide us with a greater awareness of our own emotional and physical states.

**Dr. David Morris**, professor of philosophy, takes a phenomenological approach to understanding diabetes and other chronic diseases, particularly those beginning in early childhood. By grasping the experience of diabetics from within the person, and the essential importance for them to closely monitor time, we can better understand why, for example, a young type 1 diabetic may lie about his compliance with treatment.

*Continued on page 2.*



**David B. King**  
Applications of Modelling in  
the Natural & Social Sciences  
(Graduate Program)

**W**hen discussing issues of health, it is rare to consider the content of one's dreams. What seems even rarer, perhaps, is to hear of scientific research on the relationship between these two aspects of our daily lives. Nevertheless, within psychology and dream research specifically, this relationship has gained a respectable amount of attention.

Throughout history, a number of prominent individuals have suggested a strong connection between our health and our dreams. In the fifth century B.C.E., Hippocrates (often considered the father of medicine) proposed that some dreams have the potential to indicate diseases and physical conditions. The second century Greek physician Galen stressed the ability of dreams to foretell impending illness and in some cases diagnosed his patients based on their dream reports.

In the past century, a number of common themes and images have been observed in the

dreams of cancer patients are often quite specific, indicating the type and location of the cancer. One report described a breast cancer patient who dreamed that her head was shaved with the word "cancer" written on it. Three weeks later, she received the diagnosis that the cancer had spread to her brain (Van de Castle, 1994).

In terms of cardiovascular conditions, dreams frequently include images of blood, explosions, and rhythmic sounds, likely reflecting one's heart beat. One patient dreamed of getting shot in the heart and seeing blood flow out before having a cardiac episode (Ziegler, 1962). Respiratory conditions, on the other hand, often result in dream reports of suffocation. Asthmatics tend to report more aggressive acts and threats to the self in their dreams (Levitan & Winkler, 1985).



**David B. King**



With respect to gastrointestinal problems, dreams often include images of sewage, waste, spoiled food, and in some cases intestinal worms. Dream reports of those experiencing neurological disorders typically focus on the head, as do the dreams of migraine sufferers. In addition, dreams immediately preceding migraine onset tend to contain more anger and apprehension (Heather-Greener, Comstock, & Joyce, 1996).

Pain and infection are equally reflected in dream content. Mitchell (1923) reported a woman who dreamed repetitively that a nurse was holding a burning candle near her left leg. As the dreams progressed over the course of a year, the candle was brought closer and closer to her leg until it began to burn. After some time, the woman developed pain and eventually an infection in the bone marrow of her left leg.

Robert Van de Castle, a prominent American dream researcher, also found that dreams during the menstrual cycle and pregnancy result in distinct dream themes. During pregnancy, images of babies and plant growth are both common.

A recent study at Trent University (King & DeCicco, in press) examined the relationship between daily health (physical and mental) and dream content. Dream content was examined for the frequency of particular images and themes using a previously established method of Content Analysis (Hall & Van de Castle, 1966). Waking life health and mood were measured using various self-report measures. Based on a preliminary sample of only twenty-seven participants, a number of statistically significant relationships were observed.

Most notably, as physical health declined, references to injuries, illnesses, and misfortunes increased in dream reports. References to body parts also increased, particularly mentions of the head. These findings suggest a strong preoccupation during dreamtime with the physical body in those experiencing poorer health.

Those reporting lower levels of energy during their waking life displayed a greater number of physical movements (e.g., walking or running) in their dreams. This finding suggests that dreams may occasionally compensate for that which we are lacking in our waking lives. In addition, those indicating higher levels of physical pain reported more animals in their dreams, possibly reflecting some sort of regression during painful conditions.

In terms of mental health, those reporting lower emotional well-being and higher depression had more frequent reports of sadness and anger in their dreams. Depressed individuals also reported more aggressive acts with the self as the target. This suggests a masochistic quality of the dreams of the depressed, which has been reported previously by Beck and Ward (1961).

Although this study did not account for the precise nature of the health conditions, findings suggest considerable continuity between our daily health and our dreams. This continuous relationship appears to be quite direct, in that physical health is reflected by physical imagery and mental health is reflected by emotional imagery.

From a holistic point of view, any additional insight into an individual's health should be considered valuable, including that which is gained from dreaming. If individuals took more time to consider the information contained within their dreams, they would likely develop a greater awareness of their waking lives, especially their physical and mental states. ■

Email D. King at [davidking2@trentu.ca](mailto:davidking2@trentu.ca) for cited references.