

In Memoriam

Sonja Findlater, BSc (OT), MSc, PhD

Heart & Stroke would like to honour the memory of Dr. Sonja Findlater, a respected member of Canada's stroke recovery research community who died suddenly in an avalanche recently.

An experienced ice climber, Sonja was participating in a guided ice climb near Field B.C. when an avalanche hit. She was airlifted to Foothills Medical Centre, but succumbed to her injuries.

Sonja, who grew up on a farm near Red Deer, Alberta, began her career as an occupational therapist specializing in neuro-rehabilitation. After spending 16 years as a clinician, she went back to school to pursue graduate work, joining Dr. Sean Dukelow's lab at the University of Calgary in 2011.

She was drawn to stroke research because of questions raised during her clinical career. She gained her Master's degree in Kinesiology, followed by a PhD in neuroscience. She successfully defended her PhD thesis on February 14, 2019, just weeks before her death. Her research focused on understanding the neural correlates of proprioception (awareness of location or movement of one's limbs without vision) after stroke (acute and chronic), using neuroimaging and robotics.

On behalf of everyone at Heart & Stroke, we express our deepest condolences to her family, friends and colleagues.

A memorial service will be held at Crossroads Church in Red Deer, AB, at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 30.