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York professor and postdoc present big data research at Parliament Hill

Faculty of Science mathematics Professor Jianhong Wu and Postdoctoral Fellow Yawen Xu were invited to participate in the Research Matters Parliament Hill Pop-Up Research Park, which took place May 18.

Professor Jianhong Wu explains his research to visitors attending the Research Matters event in Ottawa

Wu and Xu presented research from a collaborative project led by several scientists at York University. In addition to Wu and Xu, the project involves Professors Aijun An in the Lassonde School of Engineering, Paul Ritvo in the Faculty of Health, and Peter Tsasis in the Faculties of Health and Liberal Arts and Professional Studies. The research was conducted in collaboration with Manifold Data Mining Inc. and several hospitals.

The project explores the Canadian Community Health Survey to identify statistically significant variables that influence the classification of an individual's current health status and sentiment. The team will use these variables to build predictive models for informing behaviour changes that can lead to management of chronic diseases, improved wellness and quality of life. The project aims to advance both population and individualized healthcare in Canada.

"The purpose of the Pop-Up Research Park, organized by the Council of Ontario Universities (COU), was to provide MPs, political staff, and senior government officials an opportunity to engage with Ontario university research teams and learn more about how their research is impacting Ontarians," said Celia Haig Brown, associate vice-president research at York University. "It was a great opportunity to showcase York's leading role in working with industrial and hospital partners to mine big health data to inform healthy living."

"COU provided a good platform to demonstrate the important role of data science in the integration of information and knowledge gained through research funded by the tri-councils to inform policy and action," said Wu. "I was excited to be a part of sharing data scientists' perspectives and progress at the Hill."

Wu is the Canada Research Chair in Industrial and Applied Mathematics (Tier 1) and the director of the Laboratory for Industrial and Applied Mathematics. Xu is a postdoctoral fellow in statistics jointly supervised An, Wu, and Zhen Mei at Manifold Data Mining Inc. She is funded by an NSERC Collaborative Research Development grant and by BRAIN.

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