WISHING YOU
ALL A VERY
HAPPY
HOLIDAY
SEASON!

Dr. David Eidelman
Chair, Department of Medicine

Welcome to the end of the year edition of our newsletter, which is filled with news about the Department and the Faculty of Medicine. Dr. Susan Kahn tells us about the Thrombosis Program at the JGH, Dr. Razack discusses the increased importance of diversity at McGill and Drs. Bonnycastle and McConnell bring us up to date about a new program for the training of International Medical Graduates at St. Mary’s. In addition, we have many new arrivals, new appointments and honours. We hope that you find this interesting and fun to read and wish you Happy Holidays and a great New Year.

THE JGH THROMBOSIS PROGRAM: PATIENT CARE, TRAINING AND RESEARCH ON THROMBOEMBOLIC DISEASE

Dr. Susan Kahn, Professor, Founder and Director of the Program

Venous thromboembolism [VTE], which includes deep vein thrombosis [DVT] and pulmonary embolism [PE], is the 3rd most common cardiovascular condition after ischemic heart disease and stroke. PE, the most serious form of VTE, results in the hospitalization or death of over 30,000 persons in Canada each year. Anticoagulants used to treat VTE are associated with major bleeding and are a leading cause of in-hospital adverse events. The post-thrombotic syndrome is a chronic, frequent complication of DVT that occurs despite optimal anticoagulation. Effective means to prevent VTE are available but not consistently implemented. Taken together, VTE and its treatment are a significant cause of mortality, morbidity and societal burden. High quality, high impact research on VTE is needed to improve patient outcomes.

The JGH’s Thrombosis Program, founded in 1998, is actively engaged in addressing these research needs using a unique model to seamlessly integrate subspecialty-based patient care, pedagogic training and research related to thrombotic disease. The program’s multidisciplinary group of specialists includes Dr. Mark Blostein (hematology), Dr. Vicky Tagalakis and myself (internal medicine/epidemiology), Dr. Andrew Hirsch (respirology) and

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Ms. Jessica Emed (clinical nurse specialist in thrombosis). All of us are engaged in thrombosis-related patient care, training and research. Patients with thrombotic disorders are seen in the busy JGH Thrombosis Clinic and in-patient Thrombosis Consultation service, which, with the Anticoagulation Clinic, provide unique training to residents who wish to gain experience in clinical thrombosis. Indeed, the JGH Thrombosis elective is a popular choice among core internal medicine residents across McGill, and is typically booked up months in advance. A few years ago, we extended our pedagogical reach and founded the McGill Thrombosis Fellowship, which provides a year of advanced training in clinical and research aspects of thrombosis medicine after completion of specialty training in GIM, hematology or respirology. In addition to drawing Canadian trainees, our Fellowship is recognized internationally, attracting applicants from USA, Switzerland, Kuwait, and South Africa. A recent gift from a patient donor will support two fellows who intend to focus specifically on women’s issues in thrombosis.

From its inception, our thrombosis program has been research-intensive, and many of our ideas for projects are drawn directly from the patients we see in clinic or on the wards. Our group currently runs ~15 studies that are funded by peer review agencies such as CIHR, Heart & Stroke, FRSQ and NIH. Examples of ongoing innovative research include a multicenter randomized controlled trial of pharmacomechanical catheter-directed thrombolysis to prevent post-thrombotic syndrome after DVT, developing murine models of venous thrombosis to elucidate pathophysiological mechanisms of thrombus formation, a pharmacoepidemiological study of the protective effects of warfarin on death from prostate cancer, and a multicentre cohort study of longterm effects of PE on exercise capacity and quality of life. Collectively, we hold more than 22 million dollars of grant funding. We are actively sought as collaborators by our research peers nationally and internationally. We are also recognized to be a successful, experienced recruiting center by pharmaceutical and device companies seeking clinical centers for multicenter trials of novel anticoagulants or compression devices to prevent DVT.

The overall vision of the JGH Thrombosis Program is to improve patient care and population outcomes by advancing research and education in thrombosis through a multidisciplinary approach, and to establish and promote innovative research partnerships with sub-specialties such as obstetrics and gynecology, surgery, and oncology, where the burden of thrombotic disease is particularly high.

ST. MARY’S TAKES THE LEAD IN PREPARING INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL GRADUATES

Dr. Todd McConnell, Associate Professor, Internal Medicine Division & Dr. Michael Bonnycastle, Assistant Professor, Geriatrics Division

The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux is currently sponsoring a program to help international medical graduates (IMG) secure residencies in Québec. These physicians are individuals who hold medical diplomas from outside Canada or the United States and are interested in practicing here. All of these physicians have passed the LMCC examinations and have previously applied to the CaRMS program without success. In order to improve their chances on a second application, the Ministry will provide qualifying candidates with a four month training program to familiarize them with the educational process in Quebec and to improve or refresh their clinical skills. St. Mary's Hospital and Verdun Hospital have been chosen as the clinical sites for this initiative. Candidates who successfully complete the program will receive a certificate which should facilitate their second application to CaRMS. Each IMG will spend two months in family medicine with simultaneous training at the McGill Medical Simulation Center. The Department of Medicine at St. Mary's is working out a one month clinical rotation in internal medicine and the fourth month will be an elective chosen by the IMG. This is an excellent opportunity for St. Mary's to expand its teaching program using the large number of patients that are currently not part of clinical teaching units. There are of course resource issues that are currently being worked out with the very active support of the Ministry. The current start date is April, 2011.
NEWS FROM MEDICAL EDUCATION: NAME CHANGE AND NEW MANDATE FOR THE OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS

Dr. Saleem Razack
Assistant Dean of Admissions, Equity and Diversity

As of September 1, 2010, the Office of Admissions for the MDCM Program became the Office of Admissions, Equity and Diversity (AED), with an expanded mandate consisting of:

- Assuring the quality and fairness of the student selection process
- Outreach to groups underrepresented in medicine
- Addressing diversity and equity issues across the continuum (recruitment → admissions → curriculum → residents → faculty and staff)

The reorganization reflects the McGill Faculty of Medicine’s commitment to continuously raise the bar and to respond to specific accreditation standards for medical schools from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) and the Canadian Accreditation Council on Medical Schools (CACMS). These standards state that we must know the demographics of our entering classes and develop programs to reach out to underrepresented social groups, and we must ensure the cultural safety of our learning environment. We must also know the demographics of our faculty and staff.

Do we not have a diverse, multilingual, and multi-ethnic class already?

Diversity surveys of the incoming medical classes show that our class is indeed ethnically diverse, but with the notable exceptions of Indigenous and Black students. Socioeconomically, the class is not so diverse, the majority coming from urban and privileged backgrounds. Few of our students have had previous exposure to Indigenous or Black persons, as well as to persons with disabilities, which may have significant implications for our MDCM curriculum.

If the goal is to promote a profession where excellent students from diverse social backgrounds are able to contribute, then we have some work ahead of us, with several activities underway and others in the planning. These include:

- **Towards Health/Vers la santé**: a health professions interest group pipeline program for high school students, in partnership with the CN-Montreal Alouettes Leadership Training Program and the McGill Community Outreach Projects (COP) group. This project will bring together medical students from the COP and the Alouettes in five high schools in the Montreal area and Kahnawake. The first training session was held on Saturday, November 6, 2010 and was highly successful.
- **A Web-based E-pipeline program** health professions interest group, to reach out to students from rural communities in Quebec.
- **An Indigenous Health curriculum** for the MDCM program under the leadership of Dr. Ann Macaulay.

As these programs roll out, we will start to tackle diversity and equity across the continuum, so more news to come.

We need your help! If you are interested in finding out more, we would love to hear from you: Dr. Saleem Razack (saleem.razack@mcgill.ca), and Andrew Biteen, Coordinator, Equity and Diversity Programs, Faculty of Medicine (andrew.biteen@mcgill.ca).

Education, at its core, is about having conversations that serve to open one’s mind to different ways of thinking. Paying attention to social diversity in our Faculty has the potential to enrich the permissible range of those conversations, whether at the bedside or in the classroom, in new and exciting ways.
We are pleased to welcome the following new members to our Department:

**Dr. Leora Birnbaum**, Assistant Professor to the Division of General Internal Medicine and Attending at the MUHC. Dr. Birnbaum obtained her medical degree from Université de Montréal and then completed specialty training at McGill University in general internal medicine. She completed post doctoral training in hypertension at the Institut de recherches cliniques de Montréal and is currently completing a Master of Health Professions Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

**Dr. Rose Goldstein**, McGill’s new Vice-Principal of Research and International Relations, and Professor in our Department, Division of Rheumatology. Dr. Goldstein received her Bachelor of Science from McGill in 1975 as well as her 1979 medical degree. She trained in Internal Medicine at the Universities of Toronto and Ottawa and completed her training in Rheumatology at the University of Ottawa and the University of Texas at Houston. Dr. Goldstein’s clinical activities include general rheumatology with an interest in osteoporosis and women’s health. She has been a Career Scientist of the Ontario Ministry of Health and an Arthritis Society Research Scholar in the area of immunogenetics. From 2003 to 2007, Dr. Goldstein served as Vice-Dean, Academic Affairs, in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Ottawa and was recently Vice-President (Research) at the University of Calgary. In 2001, Dr. Goldstein became the founding director of the Ottawa Academic Health Sciences Leadership Program.

**Dr. Emil Nashi**, Assistant Professor to the Division of Allergy and Clinical Immunology and Attending at the MUHC. Dr. Nashi received his medical degree from the University of Alberta in 1998 and came to McGill to complete his residency training in Internal Medicine in 2002 and Allergy and Clinical Immunology in 2004. He recently completed a PhD program at the Feinstein Institute of Columbia University and a fellowship in rheumatology at the MUHC. Dr. Nashi’s clinical and research interests are in autoimmune diseases.

**Dr. George Thanassoulis**, Assistant Professor to the Divisions of Cardiology and Clinical Epidemiology and Attending at the MUHC. Dr. Thanassoulis obtained his medical degree from the University of Toronto and then completed further training in cardiology and epidemiology at McGill University. He subsequently completed a fellowship in echocardiography at the Jewish General Hospital and has recently returned from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute’s Framingham Heart Study where he was a fellow in cardiovascular and genetic epidemiology.

**Dr. Donald Vinh**, Assistant Professor to the Division of Infectious Diseases and Attending at the MUHC. Dr. Vinh obtained his medical degree from McGill University in 2001 and subsequently completed training in Internal Medicine at the Jewish General Hospital, Infectious Diseases at the University of Manitoba and Medical Microbiology at McGill University. More recently, he completed a 3-year CIHR research fellowship in Immunocompromised Hosts, studying the immunology of infectious diseases, at the NIH. Dr. Vinh has started a translational research clinic based at the MGH to investigate human susceptibility to infectious diseases. He is focusing on identifying defects in immunological pathways responsible for atypical, severe, and/or refractory infections.
NEW CHALLENGES

Dr. Jacques Genest has stepped down as McGill and MUHC Director of the Division of Cardiology at the end of his second term on August 31, 2010. Dr. Genest has assumed the newly created role of Director of the Centre for Innovative Medicine within the Research Institute of the MUHC, a key position in planning for the new MUHC Research Institute at the Glen Yards. We are deeply grateful to Dr. Genest for a job extremely well done and wish him every success in his new position. We are pleased to announce that Dr. John Herbert Burgess has agreed to serve as Interim McGill Director of Cardiology. In his capacity, he will work closely with all hospital directors of Cardiology - Dr. Nadia Giannetti, Interim at the MUHC, Dr. David Langleben at the JGH and Dr. Nilay Ozen at St. Mary’s.

Dr. David Hornstein, Assistant Professor, has joined the MUHC Division of Internal Medicine on a full-time basis starting October 1st, 2010. He will lead the establishment of an Academic Perioperative Medicine Center at the MGH.

Dr. Beth Cummings, Assistant Professor in the Division of Internal Medicine at the JGH, has been appointed as Chair of the Clerkship Component of the Undergraduate Medical Curriculum by the Faculty. A McGill graduate, Dr. Cummings is completing a Masters in Medical Education from Maastricht University and has been the Internal Medicine Clerkship Director at the JGH since 2009.

LES GRANDS NOMS DE LA MÉDECINE AU QUÉBEC

Do not miss page 31 of the December edition of the magazine *Le Spécialiste* published by the Fédération des médecins spécialistes du Québec, featuring Dr. Ernesto Schiffrin.

A MOMENT OF PRIDE: MEAKINS-CHRISTIE ALUMNI

The Meakins-Christie Laboratories (MCL), one of the foremost centers for respiratory research in the world today, serve as an important training ground for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. MCL alumni are found throughout the world, including North and South America, Europe, Asia, and Australasia and we are very proud to have our alumni as Presidents of the two most important respiratory societies, the American Thoracic Society (ATS) and the European Respiratory Society (ERS).

Meakins-Christie Laboratories Director Dr. Qutayba Hamid at the European Respiratory Society Meeting in 2010 with prominent scientists who trained at the MCL (l to r): Dr. Marc Decramer (ERS president 2010-11), Dr. Manuel Cosio, Dr. Marina Saetta, Dr. Dean Schraufnagel (ATS president 2010-11), Dr. Qutayba Hamid, and Dr. Nikolaos Siafakas (ERS president 2009-10).
Dr. John Bergeron is the 2010 recipient of the Human Proteome Organization (HUPO) Discovery Award in Proteomics Sciences. Dr. Bergeron recently joined us as a full-time member in the Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism after serving as Chair of the Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology from 1996 to 2009.

Dr. Sasha Bernatsky, Assistant Professor in the Divisions of Rheumatology and Clinical Epidemiology, has been selected as the recipient of the Mary Betty Stevens Young Investigator Prize of the Lupus Foundation of America (LFA). This is the 2nd year for this award, which is bestowed annually by the LFA in recognition of the exceptional achievements of an investigator in the early part of his or her independent career in lupus research.

The Richard and Sylvia Cruess Chair in Medical Education has been created by generous gifts of $1 million each from Mrs. Deirdre Stevenson and Dr. Robert Stevenson, Mr. Herbert Black, and The Molson Foundation. Based at McGill’s Centre for Medical Education since 1995, Dr. Richard Cruess, former Dean of McGill’s Faculty of Medicine, and Dr. Sylvia Cruess, an endocrinologist and Professor in our Department, have been recognized for their original contributions to the understanding of medical professionalism and its relationship with medicine’s social contract. More on this story.

Congratulations to Dr. Mark Eisenberg for the recent publication of his book. The Physician Scientist’s Career Guide is a handbook for success at every stage of this challenging career path. Dr. Eisenberg is Professor in our Department and Staff Cardiologist at the JGH. He has published over 150 peer-reviewed articles, received funding for over 50 grants and mentored close to 100 students at all stages of medical and research training. For more information on the book.

Dr. David Goltzman received the Ronald V. Christie Award of the Canadian Association of Professors of Medicine in recognition of outstanding contributions to academic medicine. Dr. Goltzman was the Director of the McGill University Department of Medicine and the RVH/MUHC Physician-in-Chief of our Department from 1994 to 2004 and is currently the Director of the Calcium Laboratory at the RVH and Professor of Medicine.

Dr. Mark Wainberg, Professor in our Division of Allergy and Immunology and Director of the McGill AIDS Center at the LDI-JGH, has been awarded with the Prix Wilder-Penfield in biomedical sciences. Dr. Wainberg was one of the first Canadian scientists to study HIV/AIDS and in the late ’80s his research team was credited with the first identification of the anti-viral properties of 3TC, a widely used HIV drug. Dr. Wainberg has been a tireless voice in advocating for funding of HIV-prevention programs and universal access to prevention, care and treatment programs. More on this story.

**AWARDS**

**CIHR Institute of Genetics Maud Menten Principal Investigator Award**

Dr. Maya Saleh: Assistant Professor in the Division of Critical Care, Dr. Saleh is known for her research program which is centered on the molecular mechanisms regulating inflammation in innate immunity, inflammatory and infectious diseases, and cancer.

**CIHR Institute of Genetics Clinical Investigatorship Award (renewal)**

Dr. Brent Richards: Assistant Professor in the Endocrinology Division based at the JGH, Dr. Richards’ research is in the areas of genetic epidemiology, osteoporosis and aging.
IN MEMORIAM

By: Dr. Marvin Clamen, Faculty Lecturer, JGH

After a half of century as co-worker and friend, I find it almost impossible to encapsulate the essence of Dr. Amnon Kahn, of blessed memory.

Better known to us as Amy, his presence and stature at the Jewish General Hospital epitomized the best of our profession – a doctor, a “mentsch”, fiercely devoted to his craft, to his patients, and to his family. He was constantly on the lookout and striving for improvements and excellence in the care and treatment of those in need. Always alert to new ideas and developments in his field, he was young in ideas and wise in experience. This was evident in his practice as well as in his relationships with his patients – who adored and revered him.

To his immediate family as well as to his patients and, indeed, they were like a family – our sincere condolences. As for our Division of Endocrinology where he served as Chief for 14 years, we shall miss him greatly. His presence, his advice, his constant vigilance, always prodding us to do better and to practice more compassionate medicine. His tenure as Chief was highlighted by a spirit of innovation and accomplishment in both the research and clinical fields. Even now, his legacy is an inspiration to us all. We are proud to have been his colleagues.

By: Dr. Christopher Labos, R5

The sudden and unexpected passing of our dear friend and colleague, Dr. Chris Lui, has been a tragic and traumatic event for everyone who knew him.

Five years ago, Chris came to McGill for his Internal Medicine training and stayed on for his fellowship in Cardiology. In that time, everyone who worked with him recognized the truly outstanding individual that hid underneath that unassuming façade. He was one of the few people I knew who did not have a hint of malice or guile in his soul. His concern for everyone else’s well-being was genuine and heart felt. He was the essential element that transformed all us cardiology fellows from a group of colleagues into a group of friends.

I would like to thank all the people who have shown such concern for his family in this difficult time. The fact that so many have rallied in support of his wife Beverly and their soon-to-be-born daughter Siena is a testament to how much he was beloved by everyone who had the privilege to know him. I consider it an honor to say that he was my friend.

He will be sorely missed and never forgotten.
The number of successes is prolific. Although every attempt is made to acknowledge them all at the time we go “to press”, some announcements may be delayed. Do not hesitate to contact us to let us know of your successes.