THE EXTERNAL REVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE

Dr. James Martin, Interim Chair and Executive Vice-Chair, Faculty Affairs, Department of Medicine

At the behest of the Dean an external review of the Department was held on November 26th and 27th, 2012 as part of the process of the search for a new Department Chair. The review committee was comprised of Drs. Graydon Meneilly (University of British Columbia), Phil Wells (University of Ottawa) and David Goltzman. Many of the Department members on all sites participated in the process, providing frank feedback to the reviewers.

The report was, not surprisingly, quite favourable overall. Our strengths in teaching and research were acknowledged and the upcoming challenges associated with re-organization of clinical services were also highlighted. The important place of research in our mission was stressed. We were encouraged to strengthen our clinical research portfolio and to work towards establishing a more robust and effective mentoring program. A recruitment committee with a McGill perspective was suggested as a mechanism to facilitate recruitment and the development of a recruitment strategy. We are encouraged to recruit more clinician-scientists and to consider a research-residency track in the core training program. The availability of FRQS funding and remuneration recherche was identified as a major advantage for the support of the research enterprise but the dilemma posed by the lack of a career track following the cessation of remuneration recherche was also identified. Support for tenured positions on coming off remuneration recherche was strongly advocated. The teaching programs were judged to be strong although concerns were expressed that the program leaders were not necessarily sufficiently recompensed for their time and efforts. The many workshops for enhancing teaching skills by the Faculty have not been sufficiently availed of by clinical teachers. Junior faculty or those of us whose evaluations are not strong are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities to upgrade our teaching skills. Many complimentary remarks were directed at innovative aspects of postgraduate programs. Greater clinical collaboration across sites was proposed and existing clinical faculty was encouraged to work at more than one hospital site. A number of suggestions for a stronger administrative structure, greater integration, strategic planning and clearer academic goals for junior faculty were made. Without doubt there will be du pain sur la planche for the next Department Chair.

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The MUHC Bone Metabolism Centre is situated at the Royal Victoria Hospital (RVH) (E1.64) and houses the Bone Metabolism clinics, the National Coordinating office for the Canadian Multicentre Osteoporosis Study (CaMos) and the Clinical Research Unit. There are also important satellite activities at the Montreal General Hospital (MGH), in collaboration with the Division of Orthopaedic Surgery (Dr. Edward Harvey and myself) where all patients who have sustained a fragility fracture (in particular of the hip) are assessed systematically, as part of a post-fracture care program.

The Bone Metabolism clinics, under the leadership of Dr. David Goltzman, take place on most days and constitute a referral center for patients with varied bone problems such as osteoporosis, Paget’s disease, fibrous dysplasia, osteogenesis imperfecta, hyperparathyroidism and many others. Our staff includes endocrinologists, nephrologists and internists with a strong clinical and research interest in bone metabolism and, we welcome students, residents and fellows at various levels of training. Consultations are provided on the in- and out-patient services both at the RVH and the MGH. We also collaborate closely with members of the Nuclear Medicine and Diagnostic Radiology Departments and appreciate the expertise they provide in assessment of bone mineral density testing and other musculoskeletal imaging techniques.

CaMos, an ongoing longitudinal population-based study started in 1995, contributes knowledge on the burden of osteoporosis and fractures in Canadians as well as understanding in diverse spheres of bone metabolism such as peak bone mass, vitamin D intake and levels in Canadians, interaction between muscle and bone, frailty and fractures. There are nine recruiting centers across the country and its Principal Investigator, Dr. David Goltzman, chief statistician Claudie Berger and her team, and database managers are situated alongside us in the Bone Center.

The Clinical Research Unit has three components: the Bone and Mineral Unit, the Myeloma and Skeletal Disorders Unit and a platform for the detection and characterization of circulating tumor cells (CTCs). Over 25 investigator-initiated studies and multi-center trials have taken place there in the past ten years under the supervision of our clinical investigators (Drs. Richard Kremer, Chaim Shustik and Michael Sebag), two full time research coordinators (Nancy Renouf and Sonia Pennimpede) and a research assistant (Yofi Cohen). The studies are geared towards assessing novel therapies in osteoporosis and multiple myeloma that are not yet available in routine clinical practice. In addition the Unit has trained many students and nurses who have pursued a career in industry or academia. Finally, our Unit has built several databases as well as a bank of blood and cells/tissues samples for the purpose of defining baseline characteristics of populations with bone and cancer disorders. In addition, the platform for the detection and characterization of CTCs in breast cancer is currently being developed.

Once monthly we hold a scientific session where researchers (including from the Shriners’ Hospital and the Calcium Laboratory) and clinicians meet to bring forward new ideas. It is a privilege to work with these professionals in an environment that is stimulating, collegial and innovative.
Jewish General Hospital Adult Insulin Pump Center

By: Dr. Mark Trifiro, Professor, Divisions of Endocrinology and General Internal Medicine & Mr. Luca Cefis, Project Manager, Research Study Coordinator

The Jewish General Hospital (JGH) will be opening its Adult Insulin Pump Center in the spring of 2013. There are already existing pump centers such as the one at the Montreal Children’s Hospital headed by Dr. Laurent Legault that caters to patients less than 18 years of age. Because diabetes has reached epidemic proportions and pumps are an excellent way of controlling Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus, a greater number of diabetics are transferring to pumps. This process has been facilitated by the government which has provided coverage for juvenile diabetic pump start-ups. Patient training for insulin pump usage is rigorous and requires meticulous monitoring. This new center will allow insulin pump start-ups for the patients of eleven endocrinologists working at the hospital, and for patients who have reached the age of 18 and are transferring to an adult hospital to be followed by an endocrinologist.

The center will include a full-time and a part-time nurse, as well as a dietician specialized in carbohydrate counting, a kinesiologist and a project coordinator. Presently there are approximately 120 patients on insulin pumps being followed at the JGH. The new center will be able to initiate at least 25 new insulin pump patients per year, but the number could be as high as 40. This would mean an increase of 20 to 33% of new patients on insulin pumps being followed in the first year alone.

This pump center will also be used to carry out research on insulin pumps. Besides Pharma sponsored clinical studies there will also be research done to help in the process of “closing the loop” (the use of pumps in creating an artificial pancreas). Dr. Mark Trifiro, Chief Division of Endocrinology at the JGH, and his team will be heading this research which will include the development of blood glucose sensors that monitor glucose levels instantaneously and will provide feedback to allow the pump to work automatically.

MEAKINS-CHRISTIE LABORATORIES 40TH ANNIVERSARY

By: Dr. William Powell, Professor and Associate Director of the Meakins-Christie Laboratories

The Meakins-Christie Laboratories (MCL), founded in 1972, celebrated its 40th anniversary on October 15, 2012 with a one-day symposium on respiratory disease held at the Omni Mont-Royal Hotel. It was very well attended by current and former students, fellows, and faculty who came from all over Canada, as well as the United States, Europe, South America, Japan, and Australia. The topics covered included both basic and clinical research on asthma, COPD, pulmonary hypertension, and sleep apnea. The keynote speaker and 2012 Christie Lecturer was Stephanie Shore from the Harvard School of Public Health, who spoke on the relationship between obesity and asthma. The MCL, originally in the Lyman-Duff building, is located next to the Montreal Chest Institute on St. Urbain Street. It consists of 22 faculty members, including 12 at the St. Urbain site. Research focuses on inflammation, airway smooth muscle, host defence and genetics in relation to respiratory disease.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR WITH TENURE

Dr. Robert Scott Kiss is appointed in the Division of Cardiology. His particular expertise is in the area of cholesterol transport.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS

Dr. Michelle ELizov is a member of the Division of General Internal Medicine and the Centre for Medical Education in the Faculty of Medicine. Based at the JGH, she is an expert in medical education and an important contributor to education from undergraduate to faculty development.

Dr. Vidal Essebag is in the Division of Cardiology at the MUHC and has clinical expertise and research focus in the area of cardiac electrophysiology.

Dr. Nadia Giannetti is a member of the Division of Cardiology and Division Director of Cardiology for the MUHC. She has expertise in heart failure and has developed an outstanding program for its study and management.

Dr. Sophie Gosselin is in the Department of Emergency Medicine and is noted for her work in the area of toxicology.

Dr. Anne-Louise Lafontaine is appointed in the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery and in the Division of Neurology and Centre for Neuroscience Research at the MGH site. She is known for excellence in teaching and for research interests in movement disorders.

Dr. Chantal Seguin is a member of the Division of Hematology and has an active research program in the area of avascular necrosis.

Dr. Kevin Waschke is appointed in the Division of Gastroenterology and is noted for the excellence of his teaching and expertise in therapeutic endoscopy.

Dr. Philip Wong is appointed in the Division of Gastroenterology and is known for his expertise in liver disease. He has an active research program related to outcomes in advanced liver disease and its complications.

CANADA RESEARCH CHAIR RENEWAL

Congratulations to Dr. Stéphanie Lehoux, Associate Professor based at the Jewish General Hospital, for the renewal of her CRC Tier 2 in Cardiovascular Physiology.
Dr. Phil Gold, Professor of Medicine, Physiology and Oncology, was honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Department of Oncology at the 2nd Annual Symposium and Awards Ceremony of the Gerald Bronfman Centre for Clinical Research in Oncology. Dr. Gold also received the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal, which serves to honour significant contributions and achievements by Canadians. He was also elected as an Honorary Member of the International Golden Key Society.

Dr. Gaston Ostiguy, Associate Professor in the Respiratory Division, received the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal on November 21, 2012 at the Lung Association of Quebec’s Art de Donner evening, in recognition of his volunteer work in various respiratory health organizations.

Dr. Jean-Pierre Routy, Professor in the Divisions of Hematology and Infectious Diseases, has been appointed to the Louis Lowenstein Chair in Hematology and Oncology for a five-year term. This Chair was established in 1990 by Paul Lowenstein in honour of his father, Dr. Louis Lowenstein (1908 - 1968), a professor of Medicine at McGill and internationally renowned Hematologist-in-Chief at the RVH. Dr. Routy is an accomplished clinical hematologist and an internationally recognized researcher who has made outstanding contributions in the field of HIV, immunodeficiencies and AIDS related malignancy.

Dr. Ernesto Schiffrin, Professor and Vice-Chair (Research) in the Department of Medicine, Physician-in-Chief of the JGH Department of Medicine and Canada-in-Chief of Vascular Research at the Lady Davis Institute, has been awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in recognition of his rank as an appointee to the Order of Canada and his contributions to McGill University and to Canadian society. Dr. Schiffrin is an accomplished clinical hematologist and an internationally recognized researcher who has made outstanding contributions in the field of HIV, immunodeficiencies and AIDS related malignancy.

Dr. Kevin Waschke, Associate Professor in the Division of Gastroenterology, has been selected for the 2013 Canadian Association of Medical Education (CAME) Certificate of Merit. In addition, Dr. Waschke is the recipient of the 2012 Royal College Accredited Continuing Professional Development Provider Innovation Award on behalf of the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology (CAG) for his work on the CAG educational e-portal. He also received the CAG 2013 Young Educator Award in March at the annual meeting in Victoria BC.

The Department of Medicine’s 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.
IN MEMORIAM

By: Dr. James Martin

Dr. Jules Arthur Peter Paré, Professor Emeritus, died on February 24th, 2013. Dr. Paré was a renowned respiratory physician who was a McGill graduate. Following his training in internal medicine and respiratory medicine at McGill and subsequently the Massachusetts General Hospital, he returned to McGill where he spent his entire professional career. With Dr. Robert Fraser he wrote four editions of the textbook, Diagnosis of Diseases of the Chest. This was one of the most influential texts in the specialty and was translated into several languages. He was a model teacher and was never intimidating but was gentle and encouraging. His stature as a clinician received recognition when he was given the Distinguished Achievement Award of the American Thoracic Society for excellence in clinical medicine. Paré Rounds are still the principal clinical teaching conference of the Respiratory Division of the MUHC. He will be sadly missed by his large family and the many grateful colleagues that had the privilege of working with him.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Alphonse & Lucy Griffith Paré Foundation (http://www.parefoundation.org) or a charity of your choice.