

VITAL SIGNS

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WORD FROM THE CHAIR

*David Eidelman, M.D.
Chair, Department of Medicine*



THE WORST OF TIMES, THE BEST OF TIMES ?

The MUHC Department of Medicine held a retreat on February 5, 2007 attended by about 100 members of the Department, including colleagues from the JGH and St. Mary's. As outlined in an article elsewhere in this issue of VitalSigns¹, at the retreat we heard a lot about the plans for the new Glen Yards, the upgrade of the MGH, and how the health care system is being "reformed". Although there was some exciting news about the potential opportunities presented by the MUHC Redevelopment project, we also heard about many challenges.

Speaking with some participants afterward, I was struck by their pessimism. Of course, listening to Tim Meagher tell us how difficult it is to negotiate the proper facilities for our patients, or to Jacques Hendlisz explaining how in the government's health care reform teaching hospitals have become a low priority, was anything but encouraging. It can be rough to work with a government that endlessly creates new challenges, changes the rules of the game and puts up roadblocks to innovation.

Nevertheless, the pessimism, while understandable, is overstated. Our milieu has always been challenging.

Despite this we have always adapted, finding ways to provide good patient care, to develop a fine medical educational system, and to support a research program that has grown to exhaust available space many times over. Our success is a result of our creativity and our ability to successfully reinvent ourselves to face each new challenge. I am confident that we will adapt and succeed in the present environment as we have done in the past.

Indeed, we are now at the threshold of a period of exceptional opportunity. At the MUHC we will be building an entirely new hospital from the ground up. This will come with state of the art care areas, excellent research space and new teaching facilities. All this on a campus with room to grow for the next generation. We will also be renewing the MGH site with proper patient rooms, an up to date emergency room and yet more research space. Meanwhile, the other McGill hospitals are thriving. In particular, the Department is growing dynamically at the JGH since the arrival of Dr. Schiffrian. Furthermore, the creation of the RUIS should provide opportunities to grow our clinical, research and educational missions in ways we had scarcely imagined a few years ago.

Of course, in our milieu it is rational to be skeptical about opportunities that are "right around the corner". In the case of the MUHC, we have been talking about a "superhospital" for more than a decade. Let us hope that the time for talk is soon passed and we move to the phase of detailed planning of the new MUHC, setting the stage for McGill Medicine to reinvent itself once again.

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MUHC Department of Medicine Retreat by David Eidelman, M.D.

STEM CELL TRANPLANT PROGRAM CENTER APPROVED

Congratulations to the McGill Division of Hematology for formal approval of the Stem Cell Transplant Program by the Ministry of Health on February 19, 2007. Led by Dr. Ahmed Galal this centre has been assigned responsibility for all autologous and allogeneic related and unrelated stem cell transplants for adults in the McGill RUIS. Two years in the making, this recognition is the result of a combined effort by the JGH, MGH and RVH to set up a joint program and to successfully undergo FACT accreditation. Although thanks are due to many, special mention must be made of the contributions by McGill Division Director Dr. Steven Caplan, MUHC Division Director Dr. Molly Warner and MUHC leaders Ann Lynch and Dr. Arthur Porter. Most importantly, special thanks are due to the many members of the FACT accreditation preparation team, led by our expert consultant Linda Peltier, whose work was central to this successful outcome.

THE MCGILL CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CHIP)

David Eidelman, M.D.



The McGill Cardiovascular Health Improvement Program (CHIP) is dedicated to providing state of the art care for heart disease prevention and rehabilitation. It was founded and is staffed by physicians and scientists from the McGill University Health Center, Sir Mortimer B. Davis - Jewish General Hospital, and St. Mary's Hospital. CHIP is led by Dr. Steven Grover, a senior faculty member of the Division of General Internal Medicine and former Director of the MGH Clinical Epidemiology Division. CHIP's programming is directed by Marla Gold.

Established in 1996 as a not-for-profit organization, CHIP provides multi-disciplinary care for the prevention and treatment of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity to the Montreal community, filling a gap in the continuum of

care for cardiac patients and others. More recently, CHIP has begun to also provide fitness programs for patients recovering from cancer treatments in collaboration with the McGill Cancer Nutrition and Rehabilitation Program.

Through education, individualized exercise programs, counseling, pharmacological intervention, and psycho-social support, its goal is to reduce an individual's modifiable risk factors and improve their quality of life. CHIP staff members are also committed to doing internationally recognized research to further the knowledge surrounding heart disease prevention and rehabilitation.

Remarkably, in addition to its substantial clinical contributions, CHIP has served as a platform for high quality peer reviewed research, including many CIHR funded projects. For example, some of the research that has been recently undertaken at CHIP includes the following:

- Dr. Deborah DeCosta et al: *Efficacy of home-based exercise for postpartum depression and Lupus, CVD and Exercise*
- Dr. Kaberi Dasgupta et al: *Weight Loss in Type 2 Diabetes: Combining Supervised Exercise with liberalized pre-meal glucose targets*
- Dr. Susan Kahn et al: *Exercise for Treatment of Post Thrombotic Syndrome. The XPO Pilot Trial*

Given the absence of specific funding for cardiac rehabilitation and the inability of our hospitals to support such activities, CHIP has survived and flourished through the hard work of its organizers and with generous support of community organizations. It is a remarkable example of a privately run McGill affiliated institution that has helped to further clinical and research missions of the Department.

CHIP is located in the Atwater Club, 3505 Atwater Ave. More information may be obtained on their website: www.chiprehab.com

MUHC SLEEP LABORATORY

*Dr. John Kimoff
Director of the MUHC Sleep Laboratory*

The past two decades have seen an explosion in clinical and basic scientific knowledge concerning sleep disorders. Information has accumulated rapidly on the prevalence and wide-ranging morbidity associated with these conditions,

presenting both new opportunities and challenges for patient care, teaching and research. The most prevalent medical sleep disorder is obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) which affects 4% of women and 9% of men. OSA leads to with neurocognitive sequelae including excessive daytime sleepiness, with consequent motor vehicle crashes and workplace accidents, and may contribute to mood disturbance and cognitive impairment. Accumulating data demonstrates that OSA contributes to insulin resistance and metabolic syndrome and establishes OSA as an independent risk factor for cardiovascular complications including hypertension, arrhythmia, congestive heart failure, and stroke.

The MUHC Sleep Laboratory is the core facility supporting clinical care, teaching and research on adult sleep disorders at McGill. From its inception as a single-bed facility in 1983, the laboratory has grown progressively, culminating in 2000 with the opening of the current 6-bed state-of-the-art Laboratory located on the 10th floor of the Women's Pavilion at the RVH. The Laboratory is directed by Dr. John Kimoff, and Dr. Kateri Champagne has recently been recruited as the Associate Director. The Laboratory is staffed by 8 polysomnographic technologists and a core group of specialists from the Respiratory Division provides sleep study analysis and interpretation. Patients are evaluated in Sleep Clinics at the RVH, MCI and MGH sites staffed by the sleep group, as well as other members of the Respiratory Division, in collaboration with other specialty groups including ENT, Neurology, Cardiology, and Nephrology. We have recently added a nursing member to our clinical team, Ms. Julie Dallaire, who is involved in patient education and liaison activities.



Allen Olha setting up a patient

One of the challenges facing the Laboratory is the ever-increasing demand for services. Advances in portable monitoring technology have recently allowed us to develop an active home diagnostic program for straightforward cases of OSA. Automated CPAP devices have also facilitated the initiation of OSA treatment. This has allowed us to utilize the Laboratory more effectively, prioritizing full polysomnography for patients with complex sleep-disordered breathing, as well as the diversity of non-respiratory disorders managed in our Sleep Clinics. This year over 2,700 sleep recordings will be conducted by the Laboratory.

The Sleep Laboratory is also a focal point for student, resident and fellow teaching on sleep disorders, and for specialized CME activities. The Laboratory also supports a very active research program in sleep apnea. Dr. Kimoff has demonstrated a selective neuropathy in the upper airway of OSA patients and together with Dr. Basil Petrof and others is further exploring both the mechanisms underlying this impairment and its consequences for upper airway motor control. The Laboratory was a major recruiting centre for the CANPAP trial on CPAP for Cheyne-Stokes respiration during sleep in heart failure recently published in the NEJM. Dr. Champagne recently completed a study in collaboration with colleagues in Obstetrics and Internal Medicine demonstrating a strong association between sleep apnea and gestational hypertension. Other ongoing projects include evaluation of links between OSA and male infertility, and the effects of hemodiafiltration vs. conventional hemodialysis on OSA severity in chronic renal failure.

The Laboratory looks forward to continued growth and productivity as it strives to fulfill all aspects of its mission in advancing research, teaching and clinical-patient care activities in the Sleep Disorders field.

RECRUITMENTS

New faculty members have joined the department. Please join us in welcoming them.

We are pleased to announce that **Muriel Haziza**, M.D., has joined the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Service. Dr. Haziza is a graduate of the Université de Montréal and completed a fellowship in Neuro-rehabilitation and dysphagia. Dr. Haziza is an active physiatrist at the Montreal Rehabilitation Institute, and will be an associate physician at the MUHC.

We are pleased to announce that **Mathieu Walker**, M.D., has joined the Division of Cardiology at St. Mary's Hospital. Dr. Walker is a McGill trainee who completed a fellowship in Echocardiography at the Montreal Cardiology Institute. He will be based at St. Mary's Hospital and will hold a cross-appointment to the MUHC.

We are pleased to announce the appointment of **Dr. David Buckeridge** as an Associate Member in the McGill Department of Medicine and as a Medical Scientist in the MUHC Department of Medicine, Division of Clinical Epidemiology, effective February 1, 2007. Dr. Buckeridge is a physician with a PhD in Medical Informatics from

Stanford University. He is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Occupational Health and holds a Canada Research Chair (Tier 2) in Public Health Informatics.

We are pleased to announce the appointment of **Dr. Nandini Dendukuri** as an Associate Member in the McGill Department of Medicine and as a Medical Scientist in the MUHC Department of Medicine effective February 1, 2007. Dr. Dendukuri is a biostatistician and a graduate of McGill University (Department of Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Occupational Health). Dr. Dendukuri, recipient of an FRSQ Chercheur Boursier Junior 1 award, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Occupational Health and is based at the RVH.

The Department of Medicine at St. Mary's Hospital is delighted to announce the appointment of **Nathalie Ng Cheong** effective March 2007. Dr. Ng Cheong has distinguished herself during her training at McGill including a residency in nephrology. She is currently completing a fellowship in maternal medicine at Ste. Justine and studies in hypertension at the Institut de Recherches Cliniques de Montreal.

APPOINTMENTS

We are delighted to announce the appointment of **Dr. Vassilios Papadopoulos** as the new Director of the Research Institute of the MUHC. Dr. Papadopoulos has an international reputation as a scientist and a proven track record of leadership in biomedical research and administration. With this appointment, Dr. Papadopoulos has also been named a professor in the Faculty of Medicine at McGill University, as well as Associate Executive Director for Research at the MUHC.

Dr. Papadopoulos comes to the MUHC from Georgetown University Medical Center in Washington DC, where he served as Associate Vice President and Director of Biomedical Graduate Research. A native of Greece, he received his Diploma of Pharmacy at the University of Athens, Greece, and his PhD in Health and Life Sciences at the Université Pierre et Marie Curie, in Paris, France. He went on to complete postdoctoral research in both France and Australia, before moving to Georgetown University in the United States. Dr. Papadopoulos has authored over 200 research publications and holds over 30 scientific patents. Among his awards for research excellence, Dr. Papadopoulos holds the Gold Medal Award from the City of Athens, the Sandoz Award from the Endocrine Society of Australia, and the Biotechnology Leadership Award from

Georgetown University. He is a member of the National Academy of Pharmacy in France.

HONOURS

Dr. Andrey V. Cybulsky, MUHC Chief of Nephrology and McGill University Director of Nephrology, was appointed to the Catherine McLaughlin Hakim Chair in Medicine. This Chair was established by Dr. Raymond Hakim, a nephrologist who is currently the Chief Medical Officer & Senior Executive VP of Fresenius Medical Care North America in Tennessee, in honour of his late wife. Dr. Hakim has many family ties to McGill, with his brother and many other family members having studied and worked at McGill and affiliated hospitals. Dr. Cybulsky is the first incumbent of this Chair. He completed a nephrology clinical training and a research fellowship at Boston University. He has been an active investigator at McGill University since 1988. Dr. Cybulsky's research is directed at understanding mechanisms of renal epithelial cell injury.



On February 28th, **Richard I. Levin**, M.D., Vice Principal for Health Affairs, Dean, Faculty of Medicine and Professor of Medicine, Division of Cardiology in our department received the Heart of New York Mission Achievement Award at the American Heart Association's 15th annual Heart of New York Gala. Dr. Levin's award recognizes his 20 years of transformative leadership at the American Heart Association (AHA), where he has held senior positions both at the regional and national levels. "It's been a privilege and an honour to serve the AHA, which is one of the great voluntary organizations, dedicated to ending the epidemic of vascular disease", said Dr. Levin.

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