

## **Focus on Faculty #36**

### **Mary Ellen Macdonald**



[Dr. Mary Ellen Macdonald](#), an Associate Member of the Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology, is a medical anthropologist with doctoral training in Indigenous health and postdoctoral training in palliative care. She is an Associate Professor in the Division of Oral Health and Society in the Faculty of Dentistry at McGill University, where she has been since 2009. She is a Core Faculty member of the McGill Centre for Medical Education, Chair of the McGill Qualitative Health Research Group and Program Head of Pediatric Palliative Care Research at the Montreal Children's Hospital of the McGill University Health Centre. She also maintains affiliations with the Department of Pediatrics, the Ingram School of Nursing, and the Biomedical Ethics Unit.

Dr. Macdonald's FRQS-funded research program focuses on the health of vulnerable populations in Canada, looking across three domains: oral health, indigenous health, and palliative care. She works mainly with qualitative (especially ethnographic) and participatory methodologies. A central focus of her research program is on the various ways the social, the cultural and the political intersect to both produce and respond to particular forms of vulnerability within Canadian society.

Specific to palliative care, Dr. Macdonald's research focuses on socio-cultural analyses of child death and parental bereavement. She is currently working on a study with a Canadian team (led by Dr. S. Cadell) exploring the meaning and practices around memorial tattoos. She is also a member of an Expert Panel exploring an extension of Medical Assistance in Dying legislation for mature minors, commissioned by the Canadian Parliament.

When not working, in the winter you can find her snowshoeing with her husband – a McGill professor in the Ingram School of Nursing, and in the summer by the ocean in Nova Scotia with her daughter – a McGill science student.

We asked Dr. Macdonald to list a few of her articles whose work she is particularly proud or enjoyed the most. This is what she provided:

**Macdonald, ME.** Why should the bereaved give up their ghosts? *Discovery Society*, Issue Feb 07 2018 <https://discoversociety.org/2018/02/06/why-should-the-bereaved-give-up-their-ghosts/>

**Macdonald ME,** Kennedy K, Molls S, Pineda C, Mitchell LM, Stephenson PH, Cadell S. Excluding parental grief: A critical discourse analysis of bereavement accommodation in Canadian labour standards. *Work: A Journal of Prevention, Assessment and Rehabilitation* 2015,50(3):511-26.

LM Mitchell, PH Stephenson, S Cadell, **ME Macdonald.** Death and grief on-line: Virtual memorialization and changing concepts of childhood death and parental bereavement on the Internet. *Health Sociology Review* 21 (4), 413-431.