

## Focus on Faculty #44

### Argerie Tsimicalis



[Dr. Argerie Tsimicalis](#) is an Associate Member of the Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology and an Assistant Professor in the Ingram School of Nursing at McGill. She also holds two Nurse Scientist positions at the Shriners Hospitals for Children®-Canada (Shriners) and at the McGill University Health Centre. Dr. Tsimicalis completed her PhD at the University of Toronto in 2010, and postdoctoral training at Columbia University in 2012. At the conclusion of her post-doctoral studies, Dr. Tsimicalis returned to Canada (after living in the Upper West Side of New York for five years) and joined McGill University as an Assistant Professor in 2012.

Dr. Tsimicalis' program of research is devoted to understanding the costs (and benefits) incurred by children with a chronic illness, their families and support networks to ensure that proper health services, resources and policies are in place. Her doctoral work "*Costs Incurred by Families of Children Newly Diagnosed with Cancer in Ontario*", a study funded by the Canadian Cancer Society and Pediatric Oncology Group of Ontario (POGO), revealed that families are confronted with a wide range of out-of-pocket expenses and time costs, representing >37% of their annual after-tax income in three months. During her postdoctoral training, Dr. Tsimicalis subsequently validated a tool to measure costs and resource utilization for families of children with Type 1 diabetes and began to advance innovative informatics methodologies to capture the perspective of the child with cancer (see figure on the right).



Testing the Usability of Sisom to Help Children Express their Cancer Symptoms in Canada

Dr. Tsimicalis' expertise in cancer costs led to a partnership with the International Society of Pediatric Oncology (SIOP), Pediatric Oncology in Developing Countries (PODC) Abandonment of Treatment Working Group. This partnership permitted the replication of her PhD research in Guatemala and India where families often abandon their child's cancer treatment due to costs. As Co-Investigator on a Conquer Cancer Foundation/American Society of Clinical Oncology grant, preliminary analyses of prospectively collected direct costs (n = 394) revealed significant costs are incurred prior to and during cancer treatment for families of children with cancer in India. A

complementary study led by graduate student, Stephanie Mardakis, revealed caregivers of children with cancer are confronted with a range of direct, indirect and psychosocial costs, setting the platform for the creation of new cancer care health services, resources and policies to reduce costs and optimize benefits.

While Dr. Tsimicalis' 2013 appointment at the Shriners also refocused her scientific work to include children with osteogenesis imperfecta (OI) as a population of study, she continues to render visible the potential catastrophic costs associated with a childhood cancer diagnosis in Canada, and to introduce innovative approaches to capture the children's perspectives of their costs-of-illness. Her Sisom research, funded by POGO and the Quebec Nursing Intervention Research Network (RRISIQ), has provided the preliminary work for the adoption of an e-health platform for children to track, communicate and share their cancer symptoms at home, in the hospital and at school.

When not working, you can find Dr. Tsimicalis skiing the Laurentian Mountains with her husband, Anastasios Kouros, and 3 young children, Thanasi, Kleio and Leandros, in the winter, and swimming the Mediterranean waters of Greece, in the summer.

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

Mardakis, S; Arora, R; Bakhshi, S; Arora, A; Anis, H; **Tsimicalis, A.** A Qualitative Study of the Costs Experienced by Caregivers of Children Being Treated for Cancer in New Delhi, India. Accepted in Cancer Reports.

**Tsimicalis, A.**, Rennick, J., Stinson, J., Le May, S., Louli, J., Choquette, A., Treherne, S., Berube, S., Yoon, S., & Ruland, C. Usability Testing of an Interactive Communication Tool to Help Children Express their Cancer Symptoms. *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing*. 35(5), 320-331.

**Tsimicalis, A.**, Stevens, B., Ungar, W.J., McKeever, P., Greenberg, M., Agha, M., Guerriere, D., Barr, R., Naqvi, A., & Moineddin, R. (2012). A Prospective Study to Determine the Costs Incurred by Families of Children Newly Diagnosed with Cancer in Ontario. *Psycho-Oncology*; 21(10): 1113-1123.