

Focus on Faculty #45

Walter Gotlieb



[Dr. Walter H. Gotlieb](#) is a Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology as well as in the Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology and is the Director of Gynecologic Oncology at the Jewish General Hospital. He is first and foremost a [mensch](#), and is best defined as a true internationalist, a citizen of the world, who is not pushed by the past but driven by the future, passionate about innovation and visionary developments.

Dr. Gotlieb obtained his medical degree *summa cum laude* at Université Libre de Bruxelles, in his native Belgium, where he went on to obtain board certification in Obstetrics and Gynecology. After spending two years at the National Institutes of Health, where he obtained the National Cancer Institute Award for Outstanding Performance, he performed a three year fellowship in gynecologic-oncology at UCLA. He was then recruited by Tel Aviv University & Tel Hashomer Hospital in Israel, where he co-founded and built up the Department of Gynecologic-Oncology from 1994 to 2003. In 2003 he was recruited by McGill University and also joined the Jewish General Hospital. Over the course of his professional career, Dr. Gotlieb obtained licenses to practice in Belgium, Israel, California, and Quebec. Recently he completed an executive course in health care management and delivery at Harvard Business School. Dr. Gotlieb lives for and with his team of colleagues, nurses, administrators, and learners, and breathes his credo: respect and collaboration.

As part of his passion for innovation and a brighter future, Dr. Gotlieb is involved in translational molecular research in ovarian and other gynecologic cancers as a Project Director at the Lady Davis Institute, with the help of Dr. Amber Yasmeen who runs the laboratory. Their work has focused on molecular profiling of gynecologic cancers and correlating the results with clinical outcome, and at the same time evaluating new targeted therapies. In addition, Dr. Gotlieb together with his clinical team, Nancy Drummond, the nurse at his side for 16 years, and especially Drs. Susie Lau and Shannon Salvador, have pioneered and driven “robotic” surgery in gynecologic cancer in Canada. Recognized as a world leader in this area, Dr. Gotlieb has lectured around the world, and proctored robotic surgery multiple times in Canada, China, India, and Israel. He has published over 150 peer-reviewed manuscripts in reputable international journals, as well as review articles and chapters in leading textbooks.

Dr. Gotlieb has been actively engaged in serving the broader professional community, having just completed his mandate as President of the Gynecologic Oncology Society of Canada and as Secretary Treasurer of the International Gynecologic Cancer Society. Furthermore, he completed ten years as senior editor of the International Journal of Gynecologic Cancer, and is a member of the Editorial Board of Gynecology and Pelvic Medicine.

Dr. Gotlieb grew up in Belgium, traveled the world, worked in Africa, lived two years in Washington, three years in Los Angeles, eight years in Israel, and now sixteen years in Canada. At each station the Gotliebs had a boy. Yes, you are right, this ends up with 5 boys 'as a souvenir' of their stays. At this point the couple has decided not to move anymore!

We asked Dr. Gotlieb to list a few of his articles whose work he is particularly proud of or enjoyed the most. This is what he provided:

First paper 26 years ago investigating the role of the immune environment in ovarian cancer:

Gotlieb WH, Abrams JS, Watson JM, Velu TH, Berek JS, Martínez-Maza O. Presence of interleukin 10 (IL-10) in the ascites of patients with ovarian and other intra-abdominal cancers. *Cytokine* (1992) 4: 598-608

Followed by early attempts to develop molecular therapies

Gotlieb WH, Watson JM, Rezai A, Johnson M, Martínez-Maza O, Berek JS. Cytokine-induced modulation of tumor suppressor gene expression in ovarian cancer cells: up-regulation of p53 gene expression and induction of apoptosis by tumor necrosis factor-alpha. *Am J Obstet Gynecol.* (1994) 170: 1121-1130

Paper indicating that borderline ovarian tumors develop along a different molecular pathway compared to high grade ovarian cancers

Gotlieb WH, Friedman E, Bruchim Bar-Sade R, Kruglikova A, Hirsh Yechezkel G, Modan B, Inbar M, Davidson B, Kopolovic J, Novikov I, Ben-Baruch G. Rates of Jewish founder mutations in BRCA1 and BRCA2 in borderline ovarian tumors. *J Natl Cancer Inst.* (1998) 90: 995- 1000

Evaluation of anti-VEGF treatments in ovarian cancer

Gotlieb WH, Amant F, Advani F, Goswami C, Hirte H, Provencher D, Somani D, Yamada D, Tamby J, Vergote I. Intravenous aflibercept (VEGF Trap) for the treatment of recurrent symptomatic malignant ascites in patients with advanced ovarian cancer : results of a phase II, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study. *Lancet Oncology* 2012 13(2):154-62.

First paper of a series evaluating the value and cost-effectiveness of robotic surgery

Halliday D, Lau S, Vaknin Z, Deland C, Levental M, McNamara E, Gotlieb R, Kaufer R, How J, **Gotlieb WH**. Robotic radical hysterectomy: comparison of outcomes and cost. *J Robotic Surg* (2010) 4: 211-216

First paper of a series evaluating the value of sentinel lymph nodes

How J, Lau S, Press J, Ferenczy A, Pelmus M, Stern J, Probst S, Brin S, Drummond N, **Gotlieb W**. Accuracy of sentinel lymph node detection following intra-operative cervical injection for endometrial cancer: A prospective study. *Gynecol Oncol.* (2012) 127 (2): 673-7