

## Focus on Faculty #53

### Michael Pollak



[Dr. Michael Pollak](#) is a Professor in the Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology at McGill where he holds the Alexander E. Steinberg & Goldfarb R. Steinberg Chair in Medical Oncology, and directs the Division of Cancer Prevention. He is also a Professor in the Department of Medicine at McGill and Director of the Stroll Cancer Prevention Centre at the Segal Cancer Centre of the Jewish General Hospital.

Dr. Pollak attended medical school at McGill, and completed Internal Medicine, Clinical Oncology, and a research fellowship in Toronto before returning to Montreal.

Dr. Pollak is a clinician-scientist internationally recognized for his research in cancer endocrinology and for documenting previously unrecognized hormonal influences on carcinogenesis and cancer behavior. These discoveries have had significant implications for the prevention and treatment of the disease. The impact of his academic work is reflected in his recent election to the Royal Society of Canada, and the broad support that his nomination to the Royal Society received from colleagues in institutions in New York, Boston, Cambridge (England) and Nice (France), as well as the Lady Davis Institute at the JGH, and McGill.

Dr. Pollak has received particular recognition for a study—conducted with colleagues at Harvard University and published in the journal *Science* in 1998—showing that peptide hormones can significantly influence tumour behavior. Consequently, his laboratory has become a resource for cancer researchers from many countries who need expertise in measurement of hormones, and this aspect of his work has resulted in the publication of more than 165 papers.

Over the years, Dr. Pollak's research has yielded more than 465 publications that have been cited more than 42,500 times, with an H-Index of 103. He has received more than \$25 million in peer-reviewed funding since 1989. His most recent \$2 million grant in 2019, shared with Dr. Nahum

Sonenberg of the Goodman Cancer Centre, is a highly sought AACR “Stand Up to Cancer” award, and funds collaborative research with colleagues in Montreal, Vancouver, and Edmonton.

Dr. Pollak is an active teacher, who has participated in training 36 medical oncologists and research scientists from around the world, including Japan, Italy, Israel, France, England and China, as well as Canada and the United States.

He serves as Editor-In-Chief of the American Association for Cancer Research journal *Cancer Prevention Research*. He received the Aisenstadt Award for Academic Achievement from the JGH and the Harold Warwick Award from the Canadian Cancer Society, a prestigious honor that recognizes clinically relevant cancer research.

In his spare time Dr. Pollak enjoys skiing, sailing and Inspector Montalbano mysteries. He also enjoys walking and does his very best to walk to and from work every day.

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

Chan JM, Stampfer MJ, Giovannucci E, Gann PH, Ma J, Wilkinson P, Hennekens CH, **Pollak M**. Plasma insulin-like growth factor-I and prostate cancer risk: a prospective study. *Science* 279: 563-6, 1998. [*see also favorable editorial comment – Science* 279: 475, 1998]. Times cited (as of 2019): 1,544.

**Pollak M**. Overcoming Drug Development Bottlenecks With Repurposing: Repurposing biguanides to target energy metabolism for cancer treatment. *Nat Med* 5: 591-593, 2014.

Klil-Drori AJ, Azoulay L, **Pollak MN**. Cancer, obesity, diabetes, and antidiabetic drugs: is the fog clearing? *Nat Rev Clin Oncol* 14: 85-99, 2016.

**Pollak M**. Diet boosts the effectiveness of a cancer drug. *Nature* 60(7719): 439-440, 2018.