

**Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology
2022 Celebration of Research and Training in Oncology (CORTO)**



PART OF MCGILL UNIVERSITY'S BICENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

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On Tuesday June 21, 2022, the Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology held its inaugural Celebration of Research and Training in Oncology (CORTO) at the Sofitel Hotel in downtown Montreal and the event was part of the McGill University Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences' Bicentennial programming. It provided an opportunity not only for trainees to showcase their research to a multidisciplinary group and learn about work being done in other cancer research disciplines, but also for the Department to formally recognize the graduating trainees. There were over 100 attendees at the afternoon's Keynote Address and trainee presentations, and over 70 attendees at the graduation dinner. Feedback has been very positive with many attendees looking forward to next year's event.

The event began at 1:00 pm with welcome remarks by the Department Chair, **Professor Eduardo Franco**, and the Department's Associate Chair for Education and Director of the Radiation Oncology Residency Training Program, **Dr. Joanne Alfieri**. This was followed by the Keynote Address entitled "*The Emperor Has No Clothes: The Value Crisis in Cancer Care*" which was given by **Dr. Christopher Booth**, a medical oncologist and health services researcher at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. The balance of the afternoon was devoted to oral and poster presentations from research trainees. There were 10 oral presentations and 48 poster presentations, and the presenters included 9 Residents/Fellows, 21 PhD students, 19 MSc students, 6 Postdoctoral Fellows and 3 Graduate Diploma in Oncology students. The research presentations were multidisciplinary and included the following topics: Basic Science – Cancer Biology, Clinical Research – Medical Oncology, Radiation Oncology, and Surgical Oncology, Epidemiology and Public Health, Medical Education, Medical Physics, Patient Education, Psychosocial Oncology, and Translational Oncology. Six Department faculty members (Eduardo Franco, Luke McCaffrey, April Rose, Piotr Pater, Sonia Skamene and Luis Souhami) were tasked with choosing the best oral and poster presentations.

The first session of oral presentations was moderated by **Dr. April Rose** and **Dr. Elliot Mitmaker** and the four presenters were the following:

- **Alex Badalan** (MSc student): *Shape recognition for perfusion MRI-based prediction of treatment outcomes in neoadjuvant treatment of breast cancer*
- **Erica Mandato** (Graduate Diploma in Oncology student): *Detecting HPV ctDNA Through Liquid Biopsy as a Novel Approach to Cervical Cancer Screening*
- **Hellen Kuasne, PhD** (Postdoctoral Fellow): *Development of a pipeline to identify drug synergism in hard-to-treat breast cancers using high-throughput screening on cancer organoids*
- **Jonathan Kalinowski** (MSc student): *RapidBrachyTG43: A TG-43 Parameter Calculation Engine for Brachytherapy Applications.*

The second session of oral presentations was moderated by **Dr. Sonia Skamene** and **Professor Luke McCaffrey** and the six presenters were the following:

- **Dr. Justin Panasci** (Internal Medicine Resident): *Helicobacter pylori's deleterious impact on advanced melanoma patients treated with immunotherapy*
- **Karena D. Volesky** (completed PhD): *Cancers Attributable to Infections in the United States*
- **Marina Fukano** (PhD student): *Investigating the Epigenetic Regulation of Intra-Tumour Metabolic Heterogeneity in Triple-Negative Breast Cancer*
- **Rubén Rodrigo López Salazar, PhD** (Postdoctoral Fellow): *Study of Cancer-derived Extracellular Vesicles Uptake using Biomimetics*
- **Ryan N Rys** (PhD student): *Characterization of CD20 Expression in Relapsed/Refractory Diffuse Large B Cell Lymphoma*
- **Dr. Vanessa Di Lalla** (Radiation Oncology Resident): *Evaluation of Simulation-Based Virtual Patient Encounters for Learning Oncologic Emergency Management*

There were two poster sessions, one during the 30-minute coffee break in between the two oral sessions, and the other from 5:00-6:00 pm following the closing remarks by Dr. Alfieri.

During the afternoon many attendees visited the "Activity Corner" which was organized by **Erica Mandato, Dr. Vanessa Di Lalla** and **Dr. Ghader Jamjoum**. The purpose of the "Activity Corner" was to shed light on the non-academic aspects of participants' clinical/research careers. Four booths were set up representing Hope, Fuel, Purpose, and Balance and each booth included an explanation of the purpose of the activity (see below). In addition, there was a photobooth where attendees could take pictures with or without props and they would immediately receive an electronic souvenir photo.

- *Hope Booth:* "The Chrysanthemum flower represents 'hope for the future'. As clinicians and researchers, we aspire that our work will move the field forward and help to improve patient care.....In light of this shared goal, please come and get your 'Pin of Hope'."
- *Fuel Booth:* "As promoters of health, it is important that we also find time to care for ourselves. Part of leading a healthy lifestyle includes eating the right foods....That being said, treat yourself to a protein snack sample"
- *Purpose Booth:* "We may all be in the same field, but the reason each of us are here may be different. You may have lost a loved one to cancer, or simply be passionate about the field of oncology...Whatever your purpose, we'd love for you to share it with us. It can be expressed as a single word, phrase, or quote We will be adding it to our inspiration board!"
- *Balance Booth:* "An important part of being proficient in clinic and in the lab is having something to look forward to outside of work. It may be an extracurricular activity that you enjoy or being surrounded by family and friends...Please enjoy this compilation of photos sent in by our fellow CORTO guests which demonstrate the beauty there is in having balance."

At 6:00 pm during cocktails, the Graduation Ceremony began and graduating trainees in attendance were presented with a certificate. The following are this year's graduating trainees:

Medical Oncology

Residents

Vincent Morin
François Panet
Matthew Young

Radiation Oncology

Residents

Mohammed Aldohan
Julia Khriouan

Fellows

Rie Asso
Sara Elakshar
Jayson Paragas
Marwan Tolba

Surgical Oncology

Ghader Jamjoum

Graduate Diploma in Oncology

Ammar Afaq
George Kas Barsoum
Erica Mandato
Shamima Nasrin

Medical Physics

Alaina Bui
Jorge Campos Pazmino
Sabrina Côté-Maldonado
Marc-Antoine Fortin
James Manalad
Kayla O'Sullivan-Steben
Dipal Patel
Alana Thibodeau-Antonacci
Véronique Fortier
Logan Montgomery
Marc Morcos
Hunter Tillery

Dinner was served at 7:00 pm and during this time the winners of the oral and poster presentations were announced. **Marina Fukano (PhD student)** won for best oral presentation. The recipients of the Best Poster Award were:

- **Dr. Ian Gerard** (Radiation Oncology Resident): *An Interactive Smartphone Application For Trainees In Radiation Oncology: "The Rad Onc Handbook"*
- **Dr. François Panet** and **Dr. Matthew Young** (Medical Oncology Residents): *Neoadjuvant Trastuzumab and Pertuzumab with chemotherapy in HER2 positive early stage breast cancer: A Single-Center Experience*
- **Seta Derderian** (PhD Student): *Identifying Therapeutic Options for Patients with Advanced Prostate Cancer Through Genes In Liquid Biopsies*

Finally, the success of this inaugural CORTO event was made possible due to the hard work and dedication of the CORTO planning committee:

- Eduardo Franco (Chair, Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology)
- Joanne Alfieri (Associate Chair of Education, Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology, and Director, Radiation Oncology Residency Training Program)
- Vanessa Di Lalla (Radiation Oncology Resident)
- Ghader Jamjoum (Surgical Oncology Fellow)
- Stephanie Larocque (Associate Director, AEC-7)
- Erica Mandato (Graduate Diploma in Oncology student)
- Victoria Mandilaras (Director, Medical Oncology Residency Training Program)
- Luke McCaffrey (Graduate Program Director)
- Elliot Mitmaker (Director, Surgical Oncology Residency Training Program)
- Vanessa Preddie (Administrative and Student Affairs Coordinator)
- Francesco Rizzo (Student Affairs Officer)
- April Rose (Medical Oncologist and Clinician Scientist)
- Gayle Shinder (Chair's Senior Advisor for Academic Programs)
- Sonia Skamene (Radiation Oncologist)

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Dr. Christopher Booth

TRAINEE PRESENTATIONS



Alexandru Badalan



Erica Mandato



Hellen Kuasne, PhD



Jonathan Kalinowski



Justin Panasci, MD



Karena Volesky, PhD

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Rubén Rodrigo López Salazar, PhD



Marina Fukano



Ryan N. Rys



Vanessa Di Lalla, MD



Marina Fukano (Best Oral Presentation) and Dr. Joanne Alfieri

GRADUATING TRAINEES

Radiation Oncology

Dr. Joanne Alfieri, Director of the Radiation Oncology Residency Training Program, and Professor Eduardo Franco, Chair of the Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology, congratulate the graduating radiation oncology residents and fellows



Dr. Mohammed Aldohan (Resident)



Dr. Julia Khriguian (Resident)

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Dr. Rie Asso (Fellow)



Dr. Sara Elakshar (Fellow)



Dr. Marwan Tolba (Fellow)

Surgical Oncology

Dr. Elliot Mitmaker, Director of the Surgical Oncology Residency Training Program, and Professor Eduardo Franco, Chair of the Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology, congratulate the graduating surgical oncology fellow.



Dr. Ghader Jamjoum (Fellow)

Medical Oncology

Dr. Victoria Mandilaras, Director of the Medical Oncology Residency Training Program, and Professor Eduardo Franco, Chair of the Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology, congratulate the graduating medical oncology residents.



Dr. Vincent G. Morin (Resident)



Dr. François Panet (Resident)



Dr. Matthew Young (Resident)

Graduate Diploma in Oncology

Professor Luke McCaffrey, Graduate Program Director, and Professor Eduardo Franco, Chair of the Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology, congratulate the Graduate Diploma in Oncology graduating students.



George Kas Barsoum



Erica Mandato



Shamima Nasrin

Medical Physics

Professor John Kildea, Co-Director of Medical Physics, and Professor Eduardo Franco, Chair of the Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology, congratulate the graduating students in Medical Physics.



Sabrina Côté-Maldonado



James A. Manalad



Kayla O'Sullivan-Steben