

CORTO 2023

**2nd Annual Celebration of Research and Training in Oncology
June 8, 2023**

**CORTO**CELEBRATION OF RESEARCH
AND TRAINING IN ONCOLOGY

On Thursday June 8, 2023, the Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology held its second annual Celebration of Research and Training in Oncology (CORTO) at the Sofitel Hotel in downtown Montreal. The event 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 170 attendees at the afternoon research symposium and 76 attendees at the graduation dinner.

The event began at 1:00 pm with welcome remarks by the Department Chair, **Prof. Eduardo Franco**, and the Department's Associate Chair for Education, **Dr. Joanne Alfieri. Erica Mandato** (MSc student) who in 2022 completed the Graduate Diploma in Oncology, gave a heartfelt tribute to **Ammar Afaq** who had also completed the Diploma in the same year and tragically passed away a few months later. This was followed by the Keynote Address entitled "*The Fundamental Difference Between Cancer Treatment and Patient Care*" which was given by **Dr. Kelly McMasters**, Ben A. Reid, Sr., M.D. Professor and Chairman, Department of Surgery, University of Louisville; Director, Multidisciplinary Melanoma Clinic and Associate Director, J. Graham Brown Cancer Center in Kentucky. Dr. McMasters gave a very powerful talk addressing the importance of not only focusing on the medical, i.e., providing optimum cancer treatment, but also being attentive to the human side of cancer treatment and care.



Dr. Kelly McMasters

The balance of the afternoon was devoted to 10 oral and 45 poster presentations by the trainees. The presenters included 19 MSc and 15 PhD students, 4 Postdoctoral Fellows and 15 residents/fellows (two residents/fellows gave both oral and poster presentations), representing 35 supervisors. The research presentations were multidisciplinary including basic science- cancer biology (3 oral, 11 poster), clinical research – medical oncology (1 oral, 6 poster), clinical research – radiation oncology (1 oral, 7 poster), clinical research – surgical oncology (1 oral, 1 poster), epidemiology and public health (1 oral, 8 poster), medical education (1 poster), medical physics (1 oral, 1 poster), patient education (1 poster), psychosocial oncology (1 poster), radiobiology (1 poster), respite care (2 posters), and translational oncology research (2 oral, 5 poster).

The first session of oral presentations prior to the break was moderated by **Drs. April Rose** and **Sonia Skamene** who also served as judges to determine the best oral presentation of the session. We also were honoured to have the keynote speaker, **Dr. McMasters**, serve as a judge for the oral presentations of both sessions. The five presentations were:

- **Basmah Alhassan** (resident/fellow): *Awareness and Candidacy for Risk Reducing Strategies in High-Risk Women Referred for Breast Cancer Risk Assessment*
- **Steph Pang** (resident/fellow): *Molecular predictors and mechanisms of immune checkpoint inhibitor-induced myocarditis: a case-control study with translational correlates*
- **Parker Tope** (MSc student): *Differences in site-specific cancer incidence by individual- and area-level income in Canada from 2006-2015*
- **Matthew Dankner** (resident/fellow): *pSTAT3+ astrocytes drive the invasive growth of brain metastases*
- **Liam Carroll** (PhD student): *Radian-PET: Towards accessible dynamic positron emission tomography*



Dr. Basmah Alhassan



Dr. Steph Pang



Parker Tope



Dr. Matthew Dankner



Liam Carroll

The second session of oral presentations following the break was moderated by **Dr. Victoria Mandilaras** and **Prof. Luke McCaffrey**, who also served as judges to determine the best oral presentation of the session. The five presentations were:

- **Marie-Eve Proulx** (MSc Student): *Investigating the role of CD13 in polarity initiation and alteration of polarity programs in breast cancer progression*
- **Soumaya Labidi** (resident/fellow): *Association between site of metastasis and anti-PD1/L1 immune checkpoint inhibitor (ICI) outcomes in patients with metastatic urothelial carcinoma (mUC)*
- **Constanza Martinez** (resident/fellow): *Conventional vs. Hypo-fractionated, Radiotherapy for High-Risk Prostate Cancer (PCSS), Randomized, Non-Inferiority, Phase 3 trial: posthoc analysis of radiation therapy toxicities associated to IMRT and 3D-CRT*
- **Suzanne Kazandjian** (resident/fellow): *The Clinical and Genomic Landscape of BRAF Mutant Cancers*
- **Audrey Houle** (MSc Student): *The Role of CTCF in Breast Cancer Development and Metastasis*



Marie-Eve Proulx



Dr. Soumaya Labidi



Dr. Constanza Martinez



Dr. Suzanne Kazandjian

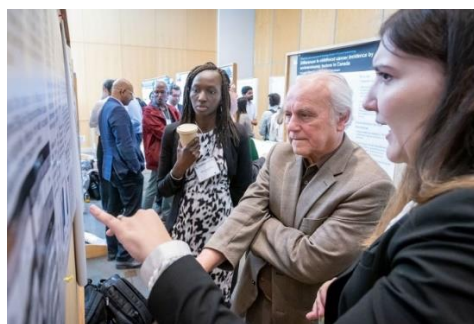


Audrey Houle

There were two 45-minute poster sessions, one during the break and one during the cocktail reception. The judges tasked with assessing the poster presentations were **Drs. Mark Basik, Gerald Batist, Islam Elkholi, Tarek Hijal, Victoria Mandilaras, Elliot Mitmaker, April Rose, Luis Souhami** and **Stephanie Wong** as well as **Professors Julia Burnier, Luke McCaffrey, Morag Park, Piotr Pater** and **Sabrina Wurzba**.



Professor Christine Maheu, Gabrielle Lalonde-LeBlond and Camilo Sierra Herrera



Dr. Mame Daro Faye, Dr. Luis Souhami and Dr. Vanessa Di Lalla

Immediately following the second session of oral presentations, the CORTO committee had a special surprise for **Prof. Eduardo Franco** to thank him for his years of service as Department Chair and his championing of oncology education and CORTO. **Dr. Luis Souhami**, a fellow Brazilian, colleague and friend, paid homage to Prof. Franco's illustrious career from his youth to the present day. This was followed by a tribute from his research collaborator and friend, **Prof. Zeev Rosberger**. As Prof. Franco is a big fan of the music of Pink Floyd, Medical Physics students, **Yujing Zou** and **Jonathan Kalinowski**, as the duo, YJK did a spectacular rendition of Pink Floyd's song, "Time" with Yujing Zou doing guitar/vocals and Jonathan Kalinowski playing the saxophone. To conclude this show of appreciation to Prof. Franco, **Gayle Shinder**, the Chair's Senior Advisor for Academic Programs, presented a gift on behalf of the CORTO committee.



Dr. Luis Souhami



Prof. Zeev Rosberger



Yujing Zou and Jonathan Kalinowski



Dr. April Rose, Prof. Eduardo Franco, Dr. Joanne Alfieri

During the course of the afternoon attendees had the chance to visit the five stations of the activity corner which was organized by the trainees, **Dr. Vanessa Di Lalla, Dr. Meredith Li** and **Erica Mandato**. The five themes were:

- *Inspire – Take a custom designed CORTO pin.*

“After a successful inauguration last year, we’re celebrating our event’s 2nd edition with a new custom CORTO logo! Last year’s Pin of Hope made a lasting impression on our guests and is now carried by many researchers and clinicians on their lanyards. Please take a pin and wear it as a reminder of why we are all here. To celebrate research and training in oncology, to motivate advancements in patient care, and to inspire the next generation of clinician scientists.”

- **Compete – Challenge your colleagues to a science game!**
“This station is meant for anyone who is up for a fun challenge. Here, you’ll find a series of games including Operation, Jenga, and OrganATTACK!”
- **Grow – Make your mark on the department canvas.**
“Select a colour and using your finger, add a leaf to the tree. This exercise is meant to represent how we offer a unique set of skills and, by working together we are contributing to a more prosperous tomorrow.”
- **Celebrate - Are you graduating this year? Come and sign your grad photos!**
“This is a station dedicated to the graduating class of 2023”.
- **Smile – Strike a pose at our photo booth!**



Activity Corner



Erica Mandato, Dr. Vanessa Di Lalla and Dr. Meredith Li

At 6:00 pm just before dinner, 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*

Suzanna Kazandjian
Meredith Li
Layla Shbat
Denis Yahiaoui

Fellows

Rakan Abulnaja

Radiation Oncology*Fellows*

Leticia Alvarado
Rie Asso
Rodrigo Cartes Indo
Jennifer Kahan
Muneeb Uddin Karim
Dima Mahmoud
Jayson Rosario Paragas

Surgical Oncology

Basmah Alhassan
Sohayb Faleh

Medical Physics*MSc*

Alexandru Badalan
Jingyi Bian
Victor Diaz Martinez
Marco Di Francesco
Hossein Jafarzadeh
Norman MacKay
Yee Man Tai
Ranjan Yadav
Medet Zhanuzakov

Medical Physics (continued)

Yujing Zou

PhD

Hossein Naseri
Haley Patrick

Residents

Anastasia Kolokotronis
Judy Wang

Graduate Diploma in Oncology

Xiao Jian (Sean) Du
Jessie Lys Claire Foubu e
Dima Kassabji
Andrea Lian
Archi Sharma
Melissa Tachdjian

Medical Oncology

Dr. Victoria Mandilaras, Director of the Medical Oncology Residency Training Program, and Prof. Eduardo Franco, Chair of the Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology, congratulate the graduating medical oncology residents and fellows who attended the graduation ceremony.



Dr. Suzanna Kazandjian



Dr. Meredith Li



Dr. Layla Shbat



Dr. Rakan Abulnaja

Radiation Oncology

Dr. Valerie Panet-Raymond, Interim Director of the Radiation Oncology Residency Training Program, and Prof. Eduardo Franco, Chair of the Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology, congratulate the graduating radiation oncology fellows.



Dr. Leticia Alvarado



Dr. Rie Asso

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Dr. Rodrigo Cartes Indo



Dr. Jennifer Kahan



Dr. Muneeb Uddin Karim



Dr. Dima Mahmoud



Dr. Jayson Rosario Paragas

Surgical Oncology

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



Dr. Basmah Alhassan



Dr. Sohayb Faleh

Medical Physics

Prof. Shirin Enger, Director of the Medical Physics Unit, and Prof. Eduardo Franco, Chair of the Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology, congratulate the graduating students in Medical Physics who attended the graduation ceremony.



Hossein Jafarzadeh



Yujing Zou



Haley Patrick

Graduate Diploma in Oncology

Prof. Eduardo Franco, Chair of the Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology and Dr. Joanne Alfieri, Associate Chair of Education, Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology, congratulate the Graduate Diploma in Oncology graduating students who attended the graduation ceremony.



Dr. Dima Kassabji

The two awards for Best Oral Presentation were presented to **Dr. Matthew Dankner** (resident/fellow) and **Dr. Soumaya Labidi** (resident/fellow) while the two awards for Best Poster Presentation were presented to **Anne Blouin** (MSc Student) and **Dr. Jayson Rosario Paragas** (resident/fellow).

Top photos with Prof. Eduardo Franco, Dr. Joanne Alfieri and Dr. April Rose; Bottom photos with Prof. Eduardo Franco and Dr. April Rose.



Dr. Matthew Dankner



Dr. Soumaya Labidi



Anne Blouin



Dr. Jayson Rosario Paragas

CORTO 2023
2nd Annual Celebration of Research and Training in Oncology

The success of the 2nd Annual Celebration of Research and Training in Oncology was made possible due to the hard work and dedication of the 2023 CORTO committee:

- Joanne Alfieri, MD (Associate Chair of Education, Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology)
- Vanessa Di Lalla, MD (Radiation Oncology Resident)
- Shirin Enger, PhD (Director, Medical Physics Unit)
- Eduardo Franco, DrPH (Chair, Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology)
- Rania Iliyan (Student Affairs Officer – AEC-7)
- Stephanie Larocque (Associate Director, AEC-7)
- Magali Lecavalier, MD (Director, Radiation Oncology Residency Training Program)
- Meredith Li, MD (Medical Oncology Resident)
- Erica Mandato (MSc student)
- Victoria Mandilaras, MD (Director, Medical Oncology Residency Training Program)
- Luke McCaffrey, PhD (Graduate Program Director, Graduate Diploma in Oncology)
- Elliot Mitmaker, MD (Director, Surgical Oncology Residency Training Program)
- Tony Narine (Administrative Student Affairs Coordinator, Residency Training Programs)
- Vanessa Preddie (Administrative Student Affairs Coordinator, Medical and Surgical Oncology Residency Training Programs)
- April Rose, MD, PhD (Medical Oncologist and Clinician Scientist)
- Gayle Shinder, PhD (Chair’s Senior Advisor for Academic Programs)



Back Row: Meredith Li, Erica Mandato, Vanessa Di Lalla, Gayle Shinder, Tony Narine, Vanessa Preddie, April Rose, Shirin Enger, Victoria Mandilaras, Elliot Mitmaker
Seated: Joanne Alfieri, Eduardo Franco

All photos by Owen Egan and Joni Dufour

The 2023 CORTO Committee is grateful for sponsorship from the Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology, the Cedars Cancer Centre - MUHC, the Lady Davis Institute- JGH, the McGill University Health Centre – Research Institute, the Rosalind and Morris Goodman Cancer Institute, the Segal Cancer Centre – JGH and St. Mary’s Research Centre.