



McGill

DEPARTMENT OF ONCOLOGY
GERALD BRONFMAN CENTRE

ANNUAL REPORT 2013

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Professor and Chair, Department of Oncology

*Annual Report prepared by Gayle A. Shinder, PhD, Program Coordinator,
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Foreword by the Chair

In August 2013 I transitioned from the position of Interim Chair to Chair of the Department of Oncology. As part of the restructuring process the Faculty is undergoing, I reviewed the list of Oncology Faculty who were cross-appointed to other University departments and eliminated those whose fit was no longer relevant to our Department. There are currently 238 Faculty: 34 Professors, 42 Associate Professors, 67 Assistant Professors, 9 Faculty Lecturers, 47 Associate Members, 30 Adjunct Professors, 3 Affiliate Members, and 6 Emeritus Professors. In 2013 the Faculty of Medicine began updating their procedures for academic staff evaluations (to be implemented in 2014). Using the Faculty's guidelines, I created an Evaluation Metrics document with the help of Dr. Gayle Shinder and Ms. Waheeda Esmail, as well as the invaluable feedback from members of the Department's Tenure & Promotions Committee. Our Evaluation Metrics document was one of two chosen by the Faculty of Medicine as examples of model criteria to be presented at the Academic Leadership Forum, led by the Provost. We also modified the Faculty's self-evaluation forms (CAS Clinical, CAS Professional, Tenure Track–Basic Research, Tenure Track–Clinician) to suit our Department's needs.

I also assisted in 2013 the integration of the Rossy Cancer Network into the scope of activities of the Department of Oncology. The former is a formidable structure that has begun to make major inroads in improving the quality of care for our cancer patients and their appreciation of the effectiveness of cutting edge treatment they receive at McGill-affiliated hospitals. The Chair of the Department of Oncology is now a permanent member of the Rossy Network's Executive Committee, and as such, he/she will oversee the academic mission of the network and make it a platform for training the next generation of oncologists and generating the research that will be translated into improvements in cancer care in the future.

In January 2013 I became the Editor-in-Chief of one of the leading public health journals, *Preventive Medicine* (5-year Impact Factor in 2012, 4.257), making our department one of the few at McGill to house a world-class medical journal. In 2013 the journal received 1021 new submissions, a 6.8% increase from 2012.

We ended 2013 on a sad note with the passing on December 29th of Dr. Parviz Ghadirian, Adjunct Professor in the Department who was a key contributor to our teaching in oncology. For more than 20 years he lectured to our graduate students and fellows on nutrition and cancer.

May 2014

Eduardo L. Franco, DrPH, FRSC, FCAHS
James McGill Professor and Chair, Department of Oncology

Summary of Department Activities

1. Research and Publications

Our faculty and associate members conduct oncology research in a broad range of disciplines including (i) basic research focusing on understanding at the molecular level, the processes involved in the development and growth of tumours; (ii) translational research looking at the development and testing of novel therapeutics; (iii) a wide range of Phase I, II and III clinical research studies testing the effectiveness of cancer treatment therapies, including chemotherapy and radiotherapy; (iv) cancer genetics studies looking at genes involved in inherited susceptibility to cancer; (v) cancer epidemiology studies aimed at providing insights into the etiology, prevention, and prognosis for several cancers, most notably cervical, prostate, and head and neck cancers; (vi) psychosocial oncology research aimed at improving the emotional well-being of patients and their families throughout the illness trajectory; (vii) research to identify ways to help patients manage pain and other symptoms of the disease such as lymphedema, weight loss and fatigue; and (viii) palliative care research aimed at helping patients and their caregivers cope at end of life.

Research funding comes from provincial, national and international sources. In response to a Quebec government's RFA, **Gerald Batist** and colleagues in academia and industry put together a proposal for a *Personalized Medicine Partnership in Cancer*. In 2013 they were awarded \$10 million in funding. Matching funds in the amount of \$11.1 million will come from private partners. Dr. Batist was featured in a story on the website of the prestigious journal *Nature*. The article mentioned the treatment success of one of his patients on farnesyltransferase inhibitors despite the fact that this class of drugs had not shown promise in clinical trials (www.nature.com/news/cancer-researchers-revisit-failed-clinical-trials-1.12835).

Marc Fabian was awarded a CFI Leaders Opportunity Fund grant. **Celia Greenwood** is one of three Co-Directors of the Ludmer Centre for Neuroinformatics and Mental Health which received funding in the amount of \$3.3 million/year from 2013 to 2017. **Laurent Azoulay** and **Tamim Niazi** were co-investigators on a ground-breaking study reported in JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association) entitled *Androgen deprivation therapy and the risk of colorectal cancer in patients with prostate cancer* (JAMA 2013, 310(3):289-296). In July **Alain Nepveu** was a keynote speaker at the European Cancer Summer School in Angers France and the title of his talk was *Non-Oncogene Addiction of RAS-Transformed Cells to Base Excision Repair*.

Publications of our faculty can be found on the Department of Oncology website: <http://www.medicine.mcgill.ca/oncology>.

2. Teaching and Learning

The new Undergraduate Medical Education (UGME) curriculum got underway in 2013 and **Michael Pollak** taught *Clinical Guidelines for the Prevention of Cancer* in Block A ("Molecules to Global Health") of Fundamentals of Medicine and Dentistry (FM&D). **Golda Tradounsky** and **Dawn Allen** had successfully promoted the incorporation of palliative care lectures in FM&D. In 2013 **Bernard Lapointe** taught *Global Public Health Issues in Palliative Care* in

Block A. Palliative care lectures were also given in Blocks B, C, F, G and J by other palliative care physicians who are not members of the Department of Oncology.

Jamil Asselah successfully negotiated with the Director of UGME Surgery (Simon Bergman) and the Clerkship Director, Internal Medicine (Peter Ghali) to give medical students in third year experience in surgical, medical and radiation oncology clinics. The oncology clerkship will be comprised of an academic half-day focusing on diagnosis and staging of cancer (90 minutes) and treatment of cancer (90 minutes) and a second academic half-day on clinical cases (colorectal cancer – 90 minutes; breast cancer – 90 minutes). There will also be six half days of oncology clinic rotations (three in medical oncology and three in radiation oncology). Surgical oncology clinic rotations will be incorporated in the surgery clerkship block.

Gayle Shinder has been regularly attending the New Curriculum Implementation Advisory committee to ensure the presence of the Department of Oncology in the discussions. She is also a member of the UGME Research sub-committee which has been developing the courses, Research Fundamentals I and II. The following members of our Department have agreed to be research mentors **Bassam Abdulkarim, Vanessa Dumeaux, Issam El Naqa, Melissa Henry, Tarek Hijal, Morag Park, George Shenouda, Miltiadis Paliouras, Janusz Rak and Patricia Tonin.**

In 2013 the Medical, Surgical and Radiation Oncology Residency Training Programs as well as Palliative Care's Year of Added Competency in Palliative Medicine (Residency) were each fully accredited by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. In addition the Surgical Oncology Fellowship Training Program received full accreditation from the Society of Surgical Oncology. This would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the directors of each of the training programs, **Lawrence Panasci** and **Scott Owen** (replacing Dr. Panasci) – Medical Oncology; **Ari Meguerditchian** – Surgical Oncology; **Khalil Sultanem** – Radiation Oncology; **Golda Tradounsky** – Palliative Care. There were 3 Residents in the Surgical Oncology Training Program and 15 residents in the Radiation Oncology Training Program. In the Medical Oncology Training Program there were 6 Residents in the two-year program and 3 in the one-year program for graduates of the hematology residency. In the Palliative Medicine Program there were 3 Family Medicine Residents. In addition the Palliative Care Continuing Medical Education Day had 92 participants.

The Psychosocial Oncology Research Training Program is under the leadership of **Carmen Loiselle**. From September 1, 2012 – August 31, 2013 the Program had 39 mentors and 25 participating fellows. Fellowships were awarded to 3 masters and 5 doctoral students as well as 1 postdoctoral fellow. Two fellows completed the Program (1 postdoctoral fellow and 1 master's student).

The McGill Integrated Cancer Research Training Program, a joint initiative between the Goodman Cancer Centre and the Segal Cancer Centre, is co-directed by **Nicole Beauchemin** and **Alan Spatz**. Program mentors include Department of Oncology members from the Goodman Cancer Centre, Segal Cancer Centre (Jewish General Hospital) and the McGill University Health Centre. From September 1, 2012 – August 31, 2013 the Program had 62 trainees.

Our members were instructors for a number of courses offered by other Departments: EPIB 671(Instructor: **Eduardo Franco**), EXMD 614 (Instructor: **Jian Hui Wu**), EXMD 616 (Instructors: **Koren Mann**, **Giuseppina Ursini-Siegel**), EXMD 635 (Instructor: **Nicole Beauchemin**), MDPH 702 (Instructors: **Jan Seuntjens**, **Issam El Naqa**), NUR2 783 (Instructor: **Carmen Loïselle**).

To honour the commitment of Emeritus Professor, **Ervin Podgorsak**, to exceptional graduate student teaching, the Medical Physics Unit created the *E.B. Podgorsak Scholarship for Graduate Studies in Medical Physics*. The inauguration took place in September.

Some clinicians have been involved in teaching activities in the McGill RUIS, for example, medical oncologist, **Jamil Asselah** has been teaching nurses and pharmacists at the Valleyfield Hospital.

Jaroslav Prchal, Director of the Department of Oncology at St. Mary's Hospital, with the support of the Associate and Assistant Deans of McGill University Continuing Health Professional Education (Ivan Rohan and Francesca Luconi) put together an online modularized course in Oncology for practicing physicians. The course is divided into Oncology I (9 modules) and Oncology II (8 modules). The modules were written by a number of clinicians in the Department of Oncology and each one tackles a different oncology theme (e.g. breast cancer, colorectal cancer, treatment, palliative care etc). The course is designed for family physicians and specialists who would receive continuing education credits.

3. Clinical Research and Clinical Innovation

Thierry Alcindor was named the Co-Chair of the Sarcoma Disease Site Committee of the NCIC Clinical Trials Group. **Fabio Cury** was the leader in the implementation of fiducial markers as a method to track prostate gland displacement between external beam radiotherapy treatments. **William Parker** conducted efficiency studies and looked at strategies to lower patient wait times for radiotherapy treatment from 28 to 21 days. Several clinicians at the MUHC have been actively involved in the planning of the move to the new Glen site. For example medical physicist, **Michael Evans** was involved in the bunker design and licensing at the new site and radiation oncologist, **Carolyn Freeman**, developed the methodology for the use of the Ambulatory Centre at the new Cancer Centre. **Michael Hier** played a pivotal role in the launching of the Head and Neck Surgery Robotics Program. Medical oncologist, **François Patenaude**, participated in the presentation to Institut national d'excellence en santé et en services sociaux Québec (INESS) for the potential registration of three new drugs in 2013 (eribulin – breast cancer, ipilimumab – melanoma, pertuzumab – breast cancer); **Petr Kavan's** Adolescent and Young Adult Oncology Program has become a role model for other oncology centres for example the Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto.

4. Involvement in the Community

Rossy Cancer Network

Department of Oncology members continue to play a key role in The Rossy Cancer Network (RCN). In 2013 **Ari Meguerditchian** was appointed Director of the Quality Cancer Care Initiative. He has been working with the RCN to develop a strategy to track outcomes in education, research and knowledge translation.

Third Annual Gerald Bronfman Centre Symposium and Awards Ceremony

The Third Annual Gerald Bronfman Centre Symposium and Awards Ceremony to honour the Bronfman family, was held on December 2, 2013. This year's focus was psychosocial oncology and featured a keynote address by Dr. Linda Carlson, Enbridge Chair in Psychosocial Oncology from the Department of Oncology at the University of Calgary, as well as talks by our own department members, Drs. **Carmen Loiselle** and **Zeev Rosberger**. Immediately following the symposium several members of the Department were presented with the Gerald Bronfman Centre Awards. Drs. **Henry Shibata** (Surgical Oncology) and **Neil MacDonald** (Cancer Nutrition-Rehabilitation Program) were honoured with Lifetime Achievement Awards, Dr. **Luis Souhami** (Radiation Oncology) received the Research and Clinical Service Award, Dr. **Lawrence Panasci** (Medical Oncology) the Teaching and Training Award and Ms. **Annie Rompré** (Segal Cancer Centre), the Academic, Clinical and Research Support Award.

The Visiting Speakers Program in Oncology (VSPO)

The VSPO is a joint initiative with the Université de Montréal. On the McGill side, **Thierry Alcindor** is the co-Director and **Winie Celestin** is the Administrator. The VSPO would not be possible without the generous support of its many corporate donors. (www.medicine.mcgill.ca/oncology/speakers/speakers_visiting-speakers.asp). In 2013 the VSPO hosted 11 speakers from Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain and USA who spoke on a variety of topics including leukemia, multiple myeloma, breast cancer, clinical trials, and hypnosis for management of acute pain and distress.

5. Milestones

New Appointments

Assistant Professors: Cristiano Ferrario (Medical Oncology) Ives Levesque (Medical Physics)

Associate Members: Jean-François Boileau (Surgical Oncology); Christine Maheu (Oncology Nursing); Belinda Nicolau (Dentistry); Argerie Tsimicalis (Oncology Nursing)

Faculty Lecturers, Palliative Care: Parissa Charghi; Pierre Cholette; Celine Dupuis; Gerard Huni; Adeline Khadoury; Elena Neamt

Adjunct Professors: Bruno Gagnon (Palliative Care); Mazen Hassanain (Surgical Oncology); Belal Mofteh (Medical Physics); Irving Wainer (Clinical Pharmacology)

Other: Waheeda Esmail (Administrative Officer, Chair's Office); Karen French (Administrative Student Affairs Coordinator, Palliative Care)

Promotions

Tarek Hijal promoted from Faculty Lecturer to Assistant Professor

Appointment Change

Golda Tradounsky (Associate Member from Faculty Lecturer)

Termination of Cross-Appointment in Oncology

Alan Brox (Adjunct Professor, Hematology-Oncology); Terry Chow (Adjunct Professor, Basic Cancer Research); John Hiscott (Associate Member, Basic Cancer Research); Lawrence Hoffman (Associate Member, Psychosocial Oncology); Esther Schirmacher (Assistant Professor, Radiopharmaceutical Chemistry); Kevin Watters (Associate Member, Pathology)

Departures

Tanya Fitzpatrick (Assistant Professor, Psychosocial Oncology); Joshua Press (Assistant Professor, Gynecologic-Oncology); Hartley Stern (Professor, Surgical Oncology); Jonathan Wan (Assistant Professor, Radiation Oncology); Philip Wong (Assistant Professor, Radiation Oncology); Stephanie Larocque (Administrative Coordinator, Clinical Research Program); Hope Makena (Administrative & Student Affairs Coordinator, Palliative Care); Carolynna Olha (Administrative Coordinator, Clinical Research Program).

Retirements

Maria Zannis-Hadjopoulos (Basic Cancer Research); Fran Ezzy-Jorgensen (Administrative Officer, Chair's Office)

6. Honours, Awards and Prizes

- **2013 Prix du Québec:** Phil Gold, Michel Tremblay
- **O. Harold Warwick Award (Canadian Cancer Society):** Michael Pollak (2012 award - notification in 2013; William Foulkes (2013 award - notification in 2014)
- **FRSQ Salary Award:** Slobodan Devic, Marc Fabian, Luke McCaffrey, Michael Witcher
- **CIHR New Investigator Salary Award:** Marc Fabian
- **Simone & Morris Fast Award (MUHC Research Institute):** Jamil Asselah, Marie Vanhuysse
- **Deane Nesbitt Award (MUHC Research Institute):** Anna Towers
- **Miscellaneous:** Michael Evans: Canadian Organization of Medical Physics Fellowship Award; Eduardo Franco: Inducted as a Fellow of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences; Carolyn Freeman: Award for innovation for the MUHC Cancer Care Mission Office of Quality and Performance Improvement from the Direction québécoise de cancerologie of the MSSS; Walter Gotlieb: Guy Michel Award (senior author), French Gynecology Society, Paris, France; Balfour Mount: Humanities Award at the Annual Assembly of the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine; Michael Pollak: Elected member of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences (CAHS); Té Vuong: Exceptional contribution in treatment of rectal cancer, FICARE International meeting in Sao Paulo; Michael Witcher: Winner of the CIHR Young Investigator Poster Presentation.
- **McGill Service Recognition:** 15 years: Marie Duclos (Radiation Oncology), Ginette Ricard (Clinical Research Program), Gayle Shinder (Chair's Office); 20 years: Robin Cohen (Palliative Care Research), Wilson Miller (Medical Oncology), Barry Stein (Surgical Oncology); 25 years: Penny Chipman (Clinical Research Program), Alain Nepveu (Basic Cancer Research), George Shenouda (Radiation Oncology), Roger Tabah (Surgical Oncology), Anna Towers (Palliative Care), Té Vuong (Radiation Oncology); 30 years: Adrian Langleben (Medical Oncology); 35 years: Carolyn Freeman (Radiation Oncology); Philip Gordon (Surgical Oncology), Catherine Milne (Surgical Oncology).

7. McGill Cyclical Review of the Department of Oncology

As described above we have made considerable progress regarding the teaching of oncology to medical students.

The Financial Oversight Committee has been discussing two options to fund the academic operations of the Department: (i) taxing the faculty; (ii) charging membership dues. Feedback

was solicited from members of the Oncology Management Committee and discussions are ongoing.

The Clinical Research Program (CRP) is continuing to open new studies and accrue patients to ongoing studies. The Program ended the 2012/2013 fiscal year with a considerable positive balance which has been used to help pay off its debt to the Faculty of Medicine. The new steering/oversight committee for the CRP met for the first time in mid-November to help guide the program as they seek ways to improve time to trial approval, increase accrual rates and improve their fiscal health. The steering committee includes stakeholders from the university, hospitals, IRB and pharmacy. The Department's Oncology Management Committee has unanimously supported the view that the CRP remains an integral part of the Department of Oncology rather than fall under the MUHC Research Institute structure for clinical research. An agreement is in the works with the Director of the MUHC Research Institute that ensures oncology clinical trials remain a McGill-centered activity.