

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

Submitted by Eduardo L. Franco, DrPH, FRSC, FCAHS, OC
James McGill Professor and Minda de Gunzburg Chair, Gerald
Bronfman Department of Oncology

*Annual Report prepared by Gayle A. Shinder, PhD, Academic Advisor to the
Chair, Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology.*

Foreword by the Chair

In May 1992, the Gerald Bronfman Centre for Clinical Research in Oncology at 546 Pine Avenue West officially opened its doors thanks to a generous donation from the Marjorie and Gerald Bronfman Foundation. Since that time the building has been the home base for the Department of Oncology and the location of the department's administrative offices. Other departmental programs headquartered in the building over the years included the centralized Clinical Research Program, the Division of Cancer Epidemiology, Cancer Genetics, the Cancer Nutrition-Rehabilitation program, the McGill Programs in Whole Person Care, Postgraduate Medical Education in Oncology, and the Visiting Speakers Program in Oncology.

In June 2016 the Department of Oncology was renamed the Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology in recognition of its leading patron and his family. During the year I worked closely with the Faculty of Medicine to plan the Department's move to new premises at 5100 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West. This move was accomplished in February 2017 and is the new home of the Department's administrative offices, the Clinical Research Program, Cancer Epidemiology, Postgraduate Medical Education in Oncology, the Graduate Program planning office and the Visiting Speakers Program in Oncology.

There have been some staff changes over the course of the year. Ms. Naomi Scobie, a long-time member of the Department administration, departed in early 2016 and has been replaced by Ms. Geralda Bacaj. October saw the retirement of Ms. Candida Pizzolongo, who for over 20 years was my right hand in ensuring the activities of the Division of Cancer Epidemiology ran smoothly. She was replaced by Ms. Anna Tzagourni. Ms. Nathalie Huard who was working with Ms. Scobie on the Visiting Speakers Program in Oncology but was based at the Université de Montréal, joined our Oncology administration after Ms. Scobie's departure. There has also been a turnover of Clinical Research Program staff as that program winds down. Also in 2016, I expanded Dr. Gayle Shinder's duties and upgraded her position to Academic Advisor to the Chair.

The Focus on Faculty profile series which I began in June 2015, continued in 2016 with the following topics/profiles: Surgical Oncology (Dr. Antoine Loutfi, Dr. Sarkis Meterissian); Palliative Care/Lymphedema (Dr. Anna Towers); Medical Oncology (Dr. Thierry Alcindor); Psychosocial Oncology (Dr. Melissa Henry); Basic Cancer Research (Dr. Josie Ursini-Siegel; Dr. Alain Nepveu, Dr. Koren Mann), Medical Physics (Dr. Jan Seuntjens); Molecular Pathology (Dr. Alan Spatz); Geriatric Oncology (Dr. Doreen Wan-Chow-Wah); and Cancer Epidemiology (Dr. Laurent Azoulay).

On the subsequent pages we report just a small fraction of the many accomplishments of our large Department which has close to 200 faculty members.

Eduardo Franco, DrPH, FRSC, FCAHS, OC
James McGill Professor
Minda de Gunzburg Chair in Oncology
Chair, Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology

Summary of Department Activities

1. Research and Publications

The research activities in the Department are multidisciplinary and include basic and translational research in cancer, clinical research, cancer prevention, cancer genetics, cancer epidemiology and population health, psychosocial oncology, palliative care and medical physics.

Publications (full list: http://www.medicine.mcgill.ca/oncology/about/about_annualreport.asp)

In 2016 our members published in top journals in the field such as: International Journal of Radiation Oncology, Biology, Physics; Journal of Clinical Oncology; International Journal of Gynecologic Cancer; Oncology Nursing Forum; Blood, American Journal of Surgery and Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Some of our members have also published in top tier journals such as the New England Journal of Medicine (2015 Impact Factor 59.558) and Lancet (2015 Impact Factor 44.002).

- Dr. Richard Margolese is first author on the Lancet paper, *Anastrozole versus tamoxifen in postmenopausal women with ductal carcinoma in situ undergoing lumpectomy plus radiotherapy (NSABP B-35): a randomised, double-blind, phase 3 clinical trial.*
- Dr. Richard Margolese is also a co-author on another Lancet paper, *Patient-reported outcomes with anastrozole versus tamoxifen for postmenopausal patients with ductal carcinoma in situ treated with lumpectomy plus radiotherapy (NSABP B-35).*
- Dr. Ivan Topisirovic is senior author on the Nature Communications paper, *mTORC1 and CK2 coordinate ternary and eIF4F complex assembly.* Dr. Antonis Koromilas is a co-author on that paper.
- Dr. Arezu Jahani-Asl's publication in Nature Neuroscience, *Control of glioblastoma tumorigenesis by feed-forward cytokine signaling,* had a lot of media coverage.

Major Funding

- “Personalize My Treatment” initiative: \$4 million in partnership funding – Exactis Innovation co-founded by Dr. Gerald Batist.
- *Cancer Stem Cell Dream Team:* \$11.7 million. Dr. Nada Jabado, Co-principal investigator.
- John R. Evans Leaders Fund (JELF) grant from CFI: Dr. Shirin Enger.
- FRQS Chercheurs-boursiers Junior 2 – Dr. Laurent Azoulay.
- FRQS Chercheurs-boursiers Senior – Dr. Koren Mann.
- FRQS Chercheurs-boursiers cliniciens, Senior – Dr. Lorenzo Ferri.

Rosy Cancer Network Funding

- *Lung cancer in Nunavik: how are we doing? (Nunavimmi puvakkut kaggutimik aanniaqarniq - qanuilirqitaa?)* Drs. Jason Agulnik, Scott Owen and Carmela Pepe are among the co-investigators on this study.
- *Establishing QUALity CARE for patients with Malignant Pleural Mesothelioma (EQUAL CARE MPM)* Drs. Hani Al-Halabi, Lorenzo Ferri, David Mulder, Linda Ofiara and Carmela Pepe are among the co-investigators on this study.
- *Quality of end-of-life of patients with prostate cancer.* Drs. Armen Aprikian, Franck Bladou, Fabio Cury and Marie Vanhuysse are co-investigators on this study.
- *Rectal toxicity prediction using accumulated-DVHs determined from daily CBCT imaging for hypo-fractionated radiotherapy of the prostate.* Dr. John Kildea is the

Principal Investigator with Drs. Fabio Cury, Sergio Faria, Tarek Hijal, Tamim Niazi and Luis Souhami as co-investigators.

- *The Breast Cancer Healthy Aging Program (BCHAP) - Developing an e-Health Program to Increase Daily Exercise and Reduce the Fatigue Associated with Breast Cancer.* Drs. Tarek Hijal and Donna Stern are among the co-investigators on this study.

2. Clinical Research and Clinical Innovation

- The Clinical Research Program continues to wind down its activities as it transfers its studies to the relevant McGill teaching hospitals.
- The Rossy Cancer Network launched a [clinical trials website](#) to keep track of the clinical trials being done at the McGill teaching hospitals.
- Dr. Shirin Enger and her group have developed an intensity modulated brachytherapy radiation delivery system that enables directional dose delivery. This will allow for the direct delivery of the radiation dose towards the tumour and at the same time shield the radiation sensitive healthy tissues to avoid side effects. They are also developing detectors for imaging and radiation therapy to increase the accuracy of radiation delivery and improve the quality of life of the patients.
- Dr. Sarit Assouline is first author on the paper, *Phase 2 study of panobinostat with or without rituximab in relapsed diffuse large B-cell lymphoma* published in *Blood*. Drs. Nathalie Johnson and Koren Mann are co-authors on the paper.

3. Teaching and Learning

- Drs. Eduardo Franco and Gayle Shinder continued refining the proposal for the Integrated Graduate Program in Oncology and created the capstone course for the program. In addition, consultations were undertaken with a number of university units whose courses are included in the program proposal.
- Under the direction of Dr. Jamil Asselah, the new Oncology Undergraduate Medical Education curriculum was implemented as part of the third year clerkship in the internal medicine block. The medical oncology and radiation oncology clinic rotations were reduced to two each from the three requested in the proposal, however, the students seem to be satisfied with the new oncology curriculum.
- Ms. Gerald Bacaj replaced Ms. Naomi Scobie as the coordinator of the Medical and Surgical Oncology Residency Training Programs.
- Dr. Eduardo Franco worked with the AEC7 finance team to find ways to cut costs. The savings were then re-directed so that all residents in the Department's PGME programs (Medical, Radiation and Surgical Oncology, Palliative Care and Medical Physics) would be allotted \$2000 for conference travel or other academic activities.
- Dr. Gayle Shinder drafted a detailed PGME procedures manual to outline the roles and responsibilities of the PGME Directors and Coordinators (for the Medical, Surgical and Radiation Oncology Residency Training Programs). Feedback was solicited by the three Directors (Drs. Scott Owen, Jean-François Boileau and Joanne Alfieri) and two Coordinators (Ms. Geralda Bacaj and Ms. Maria Fosetti).
- A number of Department members are Osler Fellows:
 - 2016 Cohort – Dr. Sender Liberman
 - 2017 Cohort – Drs. Susan Solymoss and Tsafirir Vanounou
 - 2018 Cohort – Dr. Manuel Borod
 - 2019 Cohort – Drs. Jason Agulnik, Markus Martin and Carmela Pepe
 - 2020 Cohort – Drs. Joanne Alfieri, Sarit Assouline, Tarek Hijal, Ingrid Hings, George Shenouda

- In 2016 Ms. Nathalie Huard replaced Ms. Naomi Scobie as the coordinator of the Visiting Speakers Program in Oncology. There were seven speakers in 2016 from Canada, USA, France and Belgium. Topics included hematologic cancers, colorectal cancer, bladder cancer and prostate cancer. Ms. Nathalie Huard and Dr. Gayle Shinder created a list of all VSPO lectures from 2006-2007 to 2015-2016.

4. Involvement in the Community

- Dr. Christine Maheu is one of the Principle Co-investigator leads of the new [Cancer and Work](#) website.
- Sixth International Symposium on Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer – BRCA: Challenges and Opportunities – May 2016. Dr. William Foulkes was the Scientific Programme Director and the Chair of the Scientific Committee. Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology gave \$2000.
- First International Summit on Biomarkers and Therapeutic Advances in Radiation Oncology – June 2016. Summit Co-Directors: Dr. Bassam Abdulkarim and Dr. Bertrand Jean-Claude.
- Molecular and Clinical Radiobiology Course – June 2016. Course Director: Dr. Siham Sabri.
- 20th International Congress on Palliative Care – October 2016. Congress Chair: Dr. Bernard Lapointe.

5. Milestones

Promotions

- Dr. Luke McCaffrey was granted tenure and promoted to Associate Professor.
- Dr. Josie Ursini-Siegel was granted tenure and promoted to Associate Professor.
- Dr. Jamil Asselah was promoted to Associate Professor.
- Dr. Laurent Azoulay was promoted to Associate Professor.
- Dr. Koren Mann was promoted to Associate Professor.

New Appointments

- Dr. Melissa Azoulay – Radiation Oncology
- Dr. Alexandre Orthewin – Basic Cancer Research
- Dr. Scott Weichenthal – Cancer Epidemiology

Departures

- Dr. Philip Branton – (Basic Cancer Research) - Retired
- Dr. Arthur Rosenberg (Hematology-Oncology) – Retired
- Dr. Jeremy Sturgeon (Medical Oncology) – Retired
- Dr. Marvin Wexler (Surgical Oncology) - Retired
- Dr. Celine Dupuis (Palliative Care – Faculty Lecturer) – Retired
- Dr. Pierre Cholette (Palliative Care – Faculty Lecturer) - Retired

Years of Service Milestones - 2016

- Dr. Cheryl-Ann Friedman 15 years
- Dr. Jian-Hui Wu 15 years
- Dr. Moulay Alaoui-Jamali 25 years
- Dr. Jerry Pelletier 25 years
- Dr. Richard Margolese 45 years

6. Honours, Awards and Prizes

- Order of Canada – Dr. Eduardo Franco (OC); Dr. Philippe Gros (OC); Dr. Gerald Batist (CM)
- Order of Quebec – Dr. Gerald Batist
- Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada – Dr. William Foulkes
- Award of Excellence from the Collège des médecins du Québec: Contributions to Neurosurgery – Dr. Jean-Pierre Farmer
- 2016 Prize of Excellence, Association Québécoise des infirmières en oncologie – Dr. Christine Maheu
- 2016 Award of Recognition by L'association québécoise de soins palliatifs – Dr. Bernard Lapointe
- Prix de cancérologie du Québec 2016 en Gestion des services from the Direction Québécoise de cancérologie. Drs. John Kildea and Tarek Hijal
- Creation of the *Bernard Lapointe Annual Award in Palliative Care Education* by the West Island Palliative Care Residence
- Recognition Award given by the Society of Neuro-Oncology at the Latin American meeting in Brazil – Dr. Luis Souhami
- Certificate for Highly Cited Research from the International Journal of Radiation Oncology Biology and Physics, the journal with the highest impact in the field - Dr. Luis Souhami
- Award for the best poster at the Toronto International Sarcoma Symposium for the presentation: FDG-PET, FMISO-PET, DW-MRI and DCE-MRI in the management of soft tissue sarcomas of the extremities – Dr. Fabio Cury
- McGill University Medal for Exceptional Academic Achievement – Dr. Philip Branton
- McGill Dobson Cup, category Health Sciences - First place winner - Medical Physics Unit
- One of the honourees of the Jewish General Hospital's 53rd André Aisenstadt Memorial Clinical Day – Dr. Martin Black
- 2016 Award for Excellence in Basic Research at the Lady Davis Institute/Jewish General Hospital. – Dr. Stéphane Richard
- 2016 Award for Medical Excellence, Jewish General Hospital – Dr. Walter Gotlieb
- The Limelight Award from the Goodman Cancer Research Centre for longstanding commitment to cancer research and public education – Dr. Nicole Beauchemin
- Award for “Outstanding contributions to teaching in the Radiation Oncology residency program” 2016 – Mr. William Parker
- Simone and Morris Fast Award for Oncology, McGill University Health Centre – Dr. Melissa Azoulay
- Simone and Morris Fast Award for Oncology, McGill University Health Centre – Dr. Siham Sabri