

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

Submitted by Eduardo L. Franco, DrPH, FRSC, FCAHS, OC, PhD (Hon.)
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Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology

*Annual Report prepared by Gayle A. Shinder, PhD, Academic Advisor to the Chair,
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Foreword by the Chair

On February 9, 2017 the Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology moved to its new headquarters at 5100 de Maisonneuve, Suite 720. It is the home of the Department's Administration, the Division of Cancer Epidemiology, the Visiting Speakers Program in Oncology, Coordination of Oncology Postgraduate Medical Education, the Clinical Research Program, the Integrated Graduate Program in Oncology – MSc in Oncology; Non-Thesis (forthcoming) and the Editorial Office for two medical journals, Preventive Medicine and Preventive Medicine Reports

From 2011 to 2015, the Department, with the support of the Faculty of Medicine, hosted the Gerald Bronfman Centre Symposium and Awards Ceremony to honour our principal benefactor and his family. As a result of the name change of the Department and the impending move, we did not hold the symposium/awards ceremony in 2016. On October 23, 2017 we held the First Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology Distinguished Lecture and Awards Ceremony in conjunction with the official inauguration of our new headquarters and the unveiling of a new plaque honouring the memory of Gerald Bronfman. The Distinguished Lecturer was Dr. Gerald Batist who gave a talk entitled *New Cancer Therapeutics – Moonshot and Beyond*. This year's award winners were Dr. Philip Gordon (Lifetime Achievement), Dr. Antoine Loutfi (Research or Clinical Service), Dr. Joanne Alfieri (Teaching and Mentorship) and Ms. Penny Chipman (Academic, Clinical or Research Support). In addition, the Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology and the Rossy Cancer Network, presented Kuok Fellowships to PhD student, Siyana Kurteva (supervisor, Dr. Robyn Tamblyn) and MSc student, Ariane Santerre-Thiel (supervisor, Dr. Carmen Loiselle).

The Focus on Faculty profile series which I began in June 2015 continued in 2017 with the following topics/profiles: Basic Cancer Research (Michael Witcher, Nicole Beauchemin, Pnina Brodt); Cancer Genetics (William Foulkes); Medical Oncology (Nathaniel Bouganim); Pediatric Oncology (Nada Jabado); Palliative Care (Manuel Borod, Christopher MacKinnon); Psychosocial Oncology (Christine Maheu); Pulmonology (Carmela Pepe); Radiation Oncology (Carolyn Freeman); Surgical Oncology (Mark Basik).

Our most ambitious initiative was the development of the MSc in Oncology; Non-Thesis Program which was approved by the McGill Senate and is currently being evaluated by a committee of the Bureau de Coopération Interuniversitaire (BCI). We discuss this further in this report.

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, PhD (Hon), OC, FRSC, FCAHS
James McGill Professor
Minda de Gunzburg Chair in Oncology
Chair, Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology

Summary of Department Activities

1. Research and Publications

Cancer-related research, teaching and clinical care are conducted throughout McGill and its affiliated hospitals, namely at the Rosalind and Morris Goodman Cancer Research Centre, the Jewish General Hospital (JGH) including the Segal Cancer Centre (Lady Davis Institute), the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) including the Cedars Cancer Centre and the MUHC Research Institute, St. Mary's Hospital Centre (SMHC) and at the Department's headquarters located at 5100 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West, Suite 720. Cancer-related research activities at McGill include:

- Basic research focusing on understanding at the molecular, cellular, and tissue levels the development and growth of tumours and their resistance to therapy;
- Translational research for the development and testing of novel therapeutics; biomarkers, and molecular signatures as targets for cancer detection or treatment;
- Phase I, II and III clinical research studies testing the efficacy of new cancer treatment therapies;
- Radiation physics studies to improve the delivery of radiotherapy;
- Genetic studies of inherited susceptibility to cancer;
- Epidemiological studies of the etiology, prevention, screening, and prognosis for several cancers;
- Psychosocial research aimed at improving the emotional well-being and quality of life of cancer patients and their families, and managing pain and other symptoms of the disease;
- Health systems research aimed at improving the quality of cancer care and clinical outcomes.

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

1. In 2017 Dr. Lucy Gilbert and her colleagues published a case report in the prestigious journal, *Lancet* (2016 Impact Factor 47.831)

Gilbert L, Revil T, Meunier C, **Jardon K**, Zeng X, Martins C, Arseneau J, Fu L, North K, Schiavi A, Ehrensperger E, Artho G, Lee T, Morris D, Ragoussis J. *The empress of subterfuge: cancer of the fallopian tube presenting with malapropism*. *Lancet*. 2017 Sep 2;390(10098):1003-1004. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(17)31586-6.

2. Our members also published in top journals in the field such as: *Analytical Chemistry*; *Blood*; *Cancer Epidemiology Biomarkers and Prevention*; *Carcinogenesis*; *Cell Reports*; *Gynecologic Oncology*; *International Journal of Cancer*; *International Journal of Radiation Oncology, Biology, Physics*; *Journal of Clinical Oncology*; *Nature Communications*; *Oral Oncology*; *Palliative and Supportive Care*; and *Psycho-Oncology*. As an example, Dr. Melissa Henry and her colleagues, including many from our Department, published a paper in *Psycho-Oncology*:

Henry M, Frenkiel S, Chartier G, MacDonald C, **Payne RJ**, **Black MJ**, **Mlynarek AM**, Zeitouni A, Kost K, **Loiselle C**, Ehrler A, **Rosberger Z**, Tamilia M, Chang YX, de la Mora C, Arbaud C, **Hier MP**. Thyroid cancer patients receiving an interdisciplinary team-based care approach (ITCA-ThyCa) appear to display better outcomes: Program evaluation results indicating a need for further integrated care and support. *Psycho-Oncology*. 2017 Nov 25. doi: 10.1002/pon.4590.

Major Funding

- Arezu Jahani-Asl - John R. Evans Leaders Fund award from the Canada Foundation for Innovation for her research project: *Glioblastoma pathogenesis: molecular targets and therapies*.
- Stéphane Richard - CIHR Foundation Grant for his research: *Molecular and Genetic Analysis of Arginine Methylation and RNA Binding Proteins in Health and Disease*.

- Scott Weichenthal - CIHR Foundation Grant for his research: *Identifying and Evaluating New Environmental Risk Factors for Cancer, Cardiovascular and Neurological Diseases through Innovative Approaches to Population-Based Exposure Assessment*.

Rosy Cancer Network Funding

CQI Research Fund

- *Prevention and management of intravesical bcg-related lower urinary tract symptoms in patients with non-muscle-invasive bladder cancer*. Lysanne Campeau, **F. Bladou**, S. Shamout, N. Maher, J. Roy, P. Cammisotto, **S. Tanguay**.
- *Finding effective discriminators to triage endometrial cancer surgery*. **Lucy Gilbert**, I. Comeau, R. Hemings, F. Aris, **K. Jardon**, X. Zeng, J. Arsenau, L. Fu, C. Reinhold, I. Ragoussis, O. Basso, R. Kumar, M. Wolfson
- *PD-L1 testing of EBUS-TBNA samples for Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer: feasibility, results, turnaround time and impact on patient management*. Anne Gonzalez, H. Wang, S. Beaudoin, A. Benedetti, **L. Ofiara**, K. Schwartzmann
- *Defining the patient experience in extremity soft tissue sarcoma through a sequential exploratory mixed methods approach: the Sarcoma-Specific Quality of Life Study*. Krista Goulding, **C. Freeman**, **A. Tsimicalis**, **T. Alcindor**, **A. Mlynarek**, **P. Chaudhury**, **F. Cury**, **S. Meterissian**

Quality Improvement Initiatives (QI2) Fund

- *Improving the quality of bladder cancer patients care across the RCN partner institutions: implementation ERAS protocol for radical cystectomy*. PI: **Franck Bladou**. \$23,500
- *Integrating medical cannabis into treatment options of supportive care programs in RCN*. PI: **Antonio Vigano**. \$30,000

Keynote Speaker

Thierry Alcindor

- Australasian Gastrointestinal Trials Group/Australia and New Zealand, Gastric and Oesophageal Surgery Association Joint meeting, plenary session, Cairns (Australia): “New systemic strategies in the management of gastro-oesophageal cancer”. October 5, 2017

Nicole Beauchemin

- The 27th Annual International CEA Symposium, Los Angeles, California. September 9-11, 2017

Eduardo Franco

- Chair (several plenary and symposium sessions), 31st International Papillomavirus Conference, Cape Town, South Africa (February 28 to March 2, 2017).
- Co-Chair, Epidemiology in the Americas, 21st World Congress of Epidemiology, International Epidemiological Association, Saitama, Japan (August 21, 2017).
- Chair and Speaker (several plenary and symposium sessions), 2017 EUROGIN Congress, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (October 8-10, 2017).

Jan Seuntjens

- ICRU Report 91: Prescribing Recording and Reporting of Stereotactic Radiotherapy using Small Photon Beams. International Atomic Energy Agency, ICARO-2 meeting, Vienna. June 22, 2017.
- A Monte Carlo perspective on small field radiation therapy. International Conference on Monte Carlo Applications in Medical Applications. Napoli, Italy. October 17, 2017.

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 continues to update its [clinical trials website](#) which keeps track of the clinical trials being done at the McGill teaching hospitals.
- The Rossy Cancer Network is making excellent progress on its initiatives as reported during its well-attended retreat held on November 10th.
- Medical Physics Unit: Strategic acquisition by Lifeline Software Inc. of "Radify", a web-based interface to Monte Carlo software for radiation therapy quality assurance, which was developed by Marc-André Renaud (PhD student), Dr. François Deblois and Dr. Jan Seuntjens.

3. Teaching and Learning

- The M.Sc. in Oncology; Non-Thesis program proposal (Integrated Graduate Program in Oncology) was finalized, as were five new ONCO courses designed for this program. The University Senate approved the proposal in mid-May and Dr. Shinder and Dr. Franco drafted (in English) the lengthy document required by Quebec's Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur (MEES), which delves into the logistics of the program. Through Dr. Franco's efforts, we received 51 letters of support from leaders in oncology, cancer research, public health and policy across Canada and from the United States. The document was sent out for French translation and then submitted to the Provost's office in early August 2017. In late September 2017 the Provost's office submitted the final documentation to the Bureau de Coopération Interuniversitaire (BCI) for approval prior to submission to MEES. In late December 2017 the BCI requested that we respond in writing to a list of questions regarding our proposal. This was to be completed in early January in preparation for a site visit in the spring.
- In November 2017 Dr. Franco created the position of Director of Education to oversee all Department-related education initiatives on behalf of the Chair, and appointed Dr. Joanne Alfieri to fulfill this role.
- The Medical, Surgical and Radiation Oncology Residency Training Programs went through an internal review in preparation for the 2019 Royal College accreditation. They did well, however, some issues were identified in the Medical Oncology program and a follow-up was scheduled in early 2018.
- In December Dr. Jean-François Boileau stepped down as Director of the Surgical Oncology Residency Training Program. He was replaced by Dr. Elliot Mitmaker.
- The Department was disappointed to learn that in 2017 the Radiation Oncology rotation (2 half-days) was removed from the Oncology Undergraduate Medical Education clerkship.
- Osler Fellows:
 - 2017 Cohort – Drs. Susan Solymoss and Tsafirir Vanounou
 - 2018 Cohort – Dr. Manuel Borod
 - 2019 Cohort – Drs. Jason Agulnik and Carmela Pepe
 - 2020 Cohort – Drs. Joanne Alfieri, Sarit Assouline, Tarek Hijal, Ingrid Hings, George Shenouda
- Visiting Speakers Program in Oncology
There were 11 speakers in 2017. Speakers were from Canada, USA, France and Italy. Topics included breast cancer, hematological cancers, lung cancer, quality improvement and statistics in clinical trials. The Procedures Manual was completed but will continue to be updated and refined. The VSPO coordinator, Ms. Nathalie Huard, left McGill in October. She was replaced by Ms. Chelsea Dufort in January 2018.

4. Involvement in the Community

- Dr. Nada Jabado is a conference Co-Chair for the AACR Special Conference on Pediatric Cancer Research: From Basic Science to the Clinic. December 3-6, 2017, Atlanta Georgia.
- Dr. Michael Pollak is a conference Co-Chair for the AACR Special Conference on Obesity and Cancer: Mechanisms Underlying Etiology and Outcomes. January 27-30, 2018. Austin, Texas.

5. Milestones

Promotions

- Promotion to Full Professor
 - Bassam Abdulkarim
 - Celia Greenwood
 - Carmen Loiselle
- Promotion to Associate Professor
 - Michael Witcher

New Appointments

- Maritza Hobson – Assistant Professor – Medical Physics
- Marija Popovic – Assistant Professor – Medical Physics
- Norma Ybarra – Assistant Professor – Medical Physics
- Magali Lecavlier-Barsoum – Assistant Professor – Radiation Oncology
- Sonia Skamene – Assistant Professor – Radiation Oncology
- Shireen Sirhan – Assistant Professor – Hematology-Oncology
- Annie Carbonneau – Faculty Lecturer – Radiation Oncology
- Gillian Bartlett-Esquillant – Associate Member – Family Medicine
- Elliot Mitmaker – Assistant Professor – Surgical Oncology

Departures

- Hani Al-Halabi (Radiation Oncology)
- Khusraw Sabit (Radiation Oncology)
- François DeBlois (Medical Physics)
- Emilie Soisson (Medical Physics)
- Francis Girard (Associate Director – AEC-7)
- Ameen Shaheen (Acting Financial Officer – AEC-7)
- Winie Celestin (Senior Accounts Administrator – AEC-7)
- Martin Black (Head and Neck Oncology) - Retired

Years of Service Milestones - 2017

- Karen French (Palliative Care) 15 years
- Robin Cohen (Palliative Care) 25 years
- Michel Tremblay (Basic Research) 25 years
- Sylvie Gravel (Clinical Research Program) 25 years
- Bertrand Jean-Claude (Cancer Drug Research) 30 years
- Luis Souhami (Radiation Oncology) 30 years
- Pierre Laneuville (Hematology-Oncology) 30 years
- Alain Nepveu (Basic Research) 30 years
- Josie Colubriale (AEC-7) 30 years
- Pnina Brodt (Basic Research) 35 years
- Shafaat Rabbani (Basic Research) 35 years

6. Honours, Awards and Prizes

- Laurent Azoulay – Appointed as a William Dawson Scholar
- Manuel Borod - West Island Ina Cummings Palliative Care Award
- Eduardo Franco
 - Dr. Chew Wei Memorial Prize (\$50K) in Cancer Research from the University of British Columbia
 - Distinguished Service to Cancer Research award from the Canadian Cancer Research Alliance
 - Geoffrey R. Howe Outstanding Contribution Award, Canadian Society for Epidemiology and Biostatistics (June 2017).
 - Officer of the Order of Canada, Governor-General's Chancellery, Ottawa (July 2016, investiture on May 12, 2017).
- Phil Gold – one of 100 world-renowned luminaries to be featured in the Canadian Friends of Hebrew University's Einstein Legacy Project, Genius: 100 Visions of the Future. This 3-D printed book is a celebration of the 100th anniversary of the publication of Einstein's General Theory of Relativity. On September 10th Dr. Gold was one of the distinguished invited guests at a star-studded event to mark this important project.
- Phillipe Gros renewed as a James McGill Professor
- Tarek Hijal - Prix de Cancérologie en Évolution de la pratique from the Direction générale de cancérologie
- Arezu Jahani-Asl – FRQS Chercheurs-boursiers Junior 1 salary award
- John Kildea
 - Early Career Researcher New PI Award from CIHR-ICR
 - Prix de Cancérologie en Évolution de la pratique (two awards) from the Direction générale de cancérologie
- Bernard Lapointe
 - Lifetime Achievement Award from the Canadian Society of Palliative Care Physicians
 - Senate of Canada 150 medal
- Christopher Mackinnon - Innovation award for mygrief.ca: Digital Health Canada
- Luke McCaffrey - FRQS Chercheurs-boursiers Junior 2 salary award
- Sarkis Meterissian – Certificate of Merit award from the Canadian Association for Medical Education
- Balfour Mount – To be inducted into the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame
- Alexandre Orthwein – Canada Research Chair, CIHR, Tier 2, for his research on genome stability and hematological malignancies
- Morag Park – Robert L. Noble Prize from Canadian Cancer Society
- William Parker – McGill Faculty Honour List for Education Excellence
- Jerry Pelletier – Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada
- Zeev Rosberger – CPA Fellow – Canadian Psychological Association
- Jan Seuntjens - Theresa Marcoux Award (salary support award) of the RI-MUHC
- Patricia Tonin - 2017 Karen Campbell Award for Research Excellence from Ovarian Cancer Canada
- Ivan Topisirovic – FRQS Chercheurs-boursiers Junior 2 salary award
- Michel Tremblay – McLaughlin Medal – Royal Society of Canada
- Josie Ursini-Siegel – FRQS Chercheurs-boursiers – Senior salary award
- Michael Witcher
 - FRQS, Chercheurs-boursiers Junior 2 salary award
 - Lady Davis Institute “Grant Reviewer of the Year”