

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2018**

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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,  
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### ***Foreword by the Chair***

The Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology had a very busy 2018. In April, we had our second Cyclical Review site visit (the first one had taken place in 2012). Our Department did well and we are following through on the recommendations made by the committee. Their report commended my leadership as one of the highlights. The Cyclical Review was part of the assessment of my first mandate as Department Chair, and I was subsequently re-appointed for a second term (August 1, 2018 – July 31, 2023).

In the spring, the Clinical Research Program officially closed, as all studies were successfully transferred to the hospitals. Dr. Wilson Miller continues to assist in the transition. The Rossy Cancer Network (RCN) has created a database of ongoing clinical trials at the McGill-affiliated hospitals (<https://www.mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/clinical-trials>).

In June, we had the site visit from the Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire (BCI) for our proposed M.Sc. in Oncology; Non-Thesis program. In December, we learned that the BCI had rejected our proposal. Although the external reviewers thought our program was innovative and timely and should be approved, the BCI felt that there were too many conditions and recommendations that needed to be addressed. We are currently in the process of revising the program taking into consideration the conditions and recommendations.

On October 15<sup>th</sup> we held the Second Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology Distinguished Lecture and Awards Ceremony. The Distinguished Lecturer was Dr. Pierre Band whose presentation, "Therapeutic Revolution: The History of Medical Oncology from Early Days to the Creation of the Subspecialty" was a fascinating trip through time. This year's award winners were Dr. Lawrence Panasci, Lifetime Achievement Award; Dr. Carolyn Freeman, Research or Clinical Service Award (nominated by Dr. Tarek Hijal); Dr. Scott Owen, Teaching and Mentorship Award (nominated by Dr. Michael Thirlwell) and Ms. Lina Maglieri, Academic, Clinical or Research Support Award (nominated by Dr. Armen Aprikian). Sadly, last year's recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award, Dr. Philip Gordon, passed away on April 11<sup>th</sup>.

On December 19<sup>th</sup>, we celebrated the First Annual Frances Ezzy-Jorgensen Holiday Party in memory of Mrs. Ezzy-Jorgensen, a long time administrator in the Department who retired in 2013, and sadly passed away on April 29<sup>th</sup>.

Our Department continued its "Focus on Faculty" series which I began in June 2015. Each month a different Faculty member is profiled. In 2018 we profiled the following members: Drs. Christoph Borchers, Ivan Topisirovic and Arezu Jahani-Asl – basic cancer research; Dr. Celia Greenwood – cancer epidemiology; Dr. Petr Kavan – medical oncology; Dr. Sergio Faria – radiation oncology; Dr. Ari Meguerditchian – surgical oncology; Dr. Shirin Enger – medical physics; Drs. Mary-Ellen Macdonald and Antonio Viganò – Palliative/Supportive Care; and Drs. Carmen Loiselle and Annett Körner – Psychosocial Oncology.

In October we launched our new Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/mcgilloncology/>) and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/mcgilloncology/>) pages to promote the Department's activities.

One of the challenges in 2018 was high staff turnover in AEC-7 which supports the Department in Academic Affairs, Human Resources and Finance. With Christina Raneburger hired as Associate Director

of AEC-7 in August, and the return of two people who were on leave, there has been more stability in the team.

Looking ahead to 2019 we began organizing a Departmental strategic planning retreat for April 6, 2019 and preparing for the Royal College Accreditation of our Medical, Surgical and Radiation Oncology Residency Training Programs.

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 McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) including the Cedars Cancer Centre and the MUHC Research Institute, the Jewish General Hospital (JGH) including the Segal Cancer Centre (Lady Davis 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](http://www.medicine.mcgill.ca/oncology/about/about_annualreport.asp))

In 2018 Dr. William Foulkes was senior author and Drs. Frack Bladou, Petr Kavan and Chaim Shustik were co-authors on papers published in the prestigious New England Journal of Medicine (2017 Impact Factor 79.258):

- de Kock L, Fahiminiya S, Fiset PO, Astigarraga I, Nguyen VH, Albrecht S, **Foulkes WD**. *Infantile Pulmonary Teratoid Tumor*. N Engl J Med. 2018 Jun 7;378(23):2238-2240. doi: 10.1056/NEJMc1803354. No abstract available.
- Kasivisvanathan V, Rannikko AS, Borghi M, Panebianco V, Mynderse LA, Vaarala MH, Briganti A, Budäus L, Hellawell G, Hindley RG, Roobol MJ, Eggener S, Ghei M, Villers A, **Bladou F**, Villeirs GM, Virdi J, Boxler S, Robert G, Singh PB, Venderink W, Hadaschik BA, Ruffion A, Hu JC, Margolis D, Crouzet S, Klotz L, Taneja SS, Pinto P, Gill I, Allen C, Giganti F, Freeman A, Morris S, Punwani S, Williams NR, Brew-Graves C, Deeks J, Takwoingi Y, Emberton M, Moore CM; PRECISION Study Group Collaborators. *MRI-Targeted or Standard Biopsy for Prostate-Cancer Diagnosis*. N Engl J Med. 2018 May 10;378(19):1767-1777. doi: 10.1056/NEJMoa1801993. Epub 2018 Mar 18.
- Conroy T, Hammel P, Hebbbar M, Ben Abdelghani M, Wei AC, Raoul JL, Choné L, Francois E, Artru P, Biagi JJ, Lecomte T, Assenat E, Faroux R, Ychou M, Volet J, Sauvanet A, Breysacher G, Di Fiore F, Cripps C, **Kavan P**, Texereau P, Bouhier-Leporrier K, Khemissa-Akouz F, Legoux JL, Juzyna B, Gourgou S, O'Callaghan CJ, Jouffroy-Zeller C, Rat P, Malka D, Castan F, Bachet JB; Canadian Cancer Trials Group and the Unicancer-GI-PRODIGE Group. *FOLFIRINOX or Gemcitabine as Adjuvant Therapy for Pancreatic Cancer*. N Engl J Med. 2018 Dec 20;379(25):2395-2406. doi: 10.1056/NEJMoa1809775.
- Dimopoulos MA, Tedeschi A, Trotman J, García-Sanz R, Macdonald D, Leblond V, Mahe B, Herbaux C, Tam C, Orsucci L, Palomba ML, Matous JV, **Shustik C**, Kastiris E, Treon SP, Li J, Salman Z, Graef T, Buske C; iINNOVATE Study Group and the European Consortium for

Waldenström's Macroglobulinemia. *Phase 3 Trial of Ibrutinib plus Rituximab in Waldenström's Macroglobulinemia*. N Engl J Med. 2018 Jun 21;378(25):2399-2410. doi: 10.1056/NEJMoa1802917. Epub 2018 Jun 1.

Our members also published in top journals in the field such as: Analytical Chemistry; Cancer Research; Cell Reports; Gynecologic Oncology; International Journal of Cancer; International Journal of Radiation Oncology, Biology, Physics; Journal of Clinical Oncology; Medical Physics; Nature Communications; and Psycho-Oncology. Some of our faculty members collaborate on research studies, for example, Drs. Josie Ursini-Siegel, Ivan Topisirovic and Michael Pollak published a paper in Cancer Research (2017 Impact Factor 9.130):

Im YK, Najyb O, Gravel SP, McGuirk S, Ahn R, Avizonis DZ, Chénard V, Sabourin V, Hudson J, Pawson T, **Topisirovic I, Pollak M**, St-Pierre J, **Ursini-Siegel J**. *Interplay between ShcA Signaling and PGC-1 $\alpha$  Triggers Targetable Metabolic Vulnerabilities in Breast Cancer*. Cancer Res. 2018 Sep 1;78(17):4826-4838. doi: 10.1158/0008-5472.CAN-17-3696. Epub 2018 Jun 21.

Dr. Franco was senior author in a paper in The Lancet Oncology (2017 impact factor 36.42) which included two other departmental members: Dr Walter Gotlieb and Dr Talia Malagon (Postdoc of Dr Franco):

**Malagón T**, Kulasingam S, Mayrand MH, Ogilvie G, Smith L, Bouchard C, **Gotlieb W, Franco EL**. *Age at last screening and remaining lifetime risk of cervical cancer in older, unvaccinated women: a modelling study*. Lancet Oncol. 2018 Dec;19(12):1569-1578.

### Major Funding

Our faculty members receive funding from a wide range of sources including Canadian and US funding agencies, foundations and private industry.

\$1.5 million from ONCOPOLE EMC2 - Équipes multi-institutionnelles contre le cancer:

*Targetable vulnerabilities to overcome drug resistance in poor outcome breast cancers*

Principal Investigators: **Morag Park** (Project Leader), **Michael Pollak**, Sylvie Mader

Co-Applicants: **Michael Witcher**, Claudia Kleinman, **Josie Ursini-Siegel**, Saima Hassan, **Mark Basik**, Russell Jones

### Keynote Speaker

Koren Mann - 10th Metal Carcinogenesis and Toxicity Meeting, October 28-31 Albuquerque, New Mexico.

## 2. Clinical Research and Clinical Innovation

With the recent legalization of cannabis in Canada, it is timely to mention Dr. Antonio Vigano and his work on medicinal cannabis. Dr. Vigano was appointed Expert on Medical Cannabis by the Court of Quebec, created the first world-wide post-doctoral research fellowship in medicinal cannabis and cancer supportive care, developed the first cannabis clinic within a quaternary oncology centre, and is Principal Investigator in several cannabis clinical trials including the first large scale, multicenter, Phase 3 study examining the role of cannabis in relieving pain and improving quality of life in patients with advanced cancer.

Cyr C, Arboleda MF, Aggarwal SK, Balneaves LG, Daeninck P, Néron A, Prosk E, **Vigano A.** *Cannabis in palliative care: current challenges and practical recommendations.* Ann Palliat Med. 2018 Oct;7(4):463477. doi: 10.21037/apm.2018.06.04. Epub 2018 Jun 28.

### 3. Teaching and Learning

- The Medical, Surgical and Radiation Oncology Residency Training Programs were preparing for the Royal College Accreditation to take place in March 2019.
- In July the Medical Oncology Residency Training Program implemented competency-based medical education.
- On February 16<sup>th</sup> the Radiation Oncology Residency Training Program held a retreat for their residents. The theme was career counselling.
- The Quality Improvement program for radiation oncology residents has been expanded to include surgical oncology residents. A description of the quality improvement program was published in 2018: Pembroke CA, **Alfieri J**, Biron A, **Freeman C**, **Hijal T.** Creation of an educational quality improvement program for radiation oncology residents. Pract Radiat Oncol. 2018 Mar - Apr;8(2):81-89. doi: 10.1016/j.prro.2017.11.007.
- In July the Department increased the residents' academic allowance from \$2000 to \$3000/year.
- The Department supported the following for Radiation Oncology:
  - In-training Examinations of the American College of Radiology (student exam fee in Radiation Oncology)
  - Radiation Oncology - Virtual Patient Stimulation
- We surveyed the medical, surgical and radiation oncology residents about the Multidisciplinary Oncology Residents Education (MORE) series and based on their responses we have now designated some sessions as mock tumour boards.
- The Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire (BCI) rejected our proposed M.Sc. in Oncology; Non-Thesis program. We are working on a new proposal based on the conditions and recommendations outlined in the BCI Avis.
- The Visiting Speakers Program in Oncology hosted eight speakers in 2018. The speakers came from Canada, USA and France. Topics included head and neck cancer, urothelial cancer, hematological cancers, thyroid cancer, non-small cell lung cancer and colorectal cancer.

### 4. Involvement in the Community

*The Department supported the following initiatives*

- Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Occupational Health Student Society
- BRCA: 7th International Symposium on Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer (in Montreal)
- Canadian Society for Epidemiology and Biostatistics (CSEB) Conference
- Drug Development Training Program (McGill and MUHC joint initiative)
- International Day of Medical Physics
- McGill Obstetrics and Gynecology Interest Group – HPV update

### 5. Milestones

#### Promotions and Tenure

- Té Vuong – Promotion to Full Professor
- Ivan Topisirovic – Granted tenure and promoted to the rank of Associate Professor
- Slobodan Devic – Promotion to Associate Professor

- Tarek Hijal – Promotion to Associate Professor

#### **New Appointments**

- Nader Sadeghi – Professor. Head and Neck Oncology
- George Zogopoulos – Associate Professor. Surgical Oncology
- Julia Burnier – Assistant Professor. Basic Cancer Research
- Sonia del Rincon – Assistant Professor. Basic Cancer Research
- Elliot Mitmaker – Assistant Professor. Surgical Oncology
- Piotr Pater – Assistant Professor, Medical Physics
- Barbara Rivera – Assistant Professor. Cancer Genetics
- Sonia Skamene – Assistant Professor. Radiation Oncology
- Ryan Fisher – Faculty Lecturer. Palliative Care
- Philippe Michel – Faculty Lecturer. Palliative Care
- Reza Forghani – Associate Member. Head and Neck Radiology; Neuro-oncology
- Jeffrey Hall – Associate Member. Palliative Care
- Laurie Musgrave – Associate Member. Palliative Care
- Benjamin Shieh – Associate Member. Medical Oncology
- David Cheishvili – Affiliate Member
- Emilie Soisson – Adjunct Professor. Medical Physics
- George Simos – Adjunct Professor. Basic Cancer Research

#### **Departures**

- Veena Sangwan – Assistant Professor. Basic Cancer Research
- Franck Bladou – Professor. Surgical Oncology

#### **Obituaries**

- Philip Gordon (Surgical Oncology) April 11, 2018
- Frances Ezzy-Jorgensen (Department Administration –Retired 2013)) April 29, 2018
- Arthur Rosenberg (Hematology-Oncology) September 3, 2018

#### **Years of Service Milestones – 2018**

- Walter Gotlieb 15 years
- Gayle Shinder 20 years
- Armen Aprikian 25 years
- Miguel Burnier 25 years
- Mark Goldberg 25 years
- Wilson Miller 25 years
- Té Vuong 30 years
- Carolyn Freeman 40 years

#### **6. Honours, Awards and Prizes**

- **Thierry Alcindor** - Selected to serve three years on the ASCO Annual Meeting Scientific Program Committee.
- **Joanne Alfieri** – Simone and Morris Fast Award for Oncology
- **Sonia del Rincon** – CIHR Early Career Investigator Award

- **Shirin Enger** - Famulari G\*, Rayes F, **Enger SA**, AIMBrachy. AIM-Brachy was selected as one of the 5 finalists out of 42 projects in the McGill Clinical Innovation Competition and Hakim Family Prize.
- **Eduardo Franco** – Awarded an Honorary Doctorate from University Fernando Pessoa in Porto, Portugal
- **Eduardo Franco** – Reappointed by Elsevier as Editor-in-Chief of *Preventive Medicine*, one of the most prestigious among the scholarly public Health journals.
- Vallières, M., **Freeman, C, Skamene, S.R.**, El Naqa, I. A radiomics model from joint FDG-PET and MR texture features for the prediction of lung metastases in soft-tissue sarcomas of the extremities. *Physics in Medicine and Biology* 2015;60:54-71. Awarded the 2018 Rotblat Medal for the paper that received the most citations in the preceding 5 years (per ISI)
- **Phil Gold** - Awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Queen's University.
- **Tarek Hijal, John Kildea**, Laurie Hendron. Opal: an Oncology Portal and Application. Merck Patients First Award
- **Vera Hirsh** – Cedars Cancer Centre award for achievements and leadership
- **Michael Pollak** - Appointed as one of the Editors-in-Chief of Cancer Prevention Research, a prestigious journal published by the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR)
- **Nada Jabado** - Elected as a Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences
- **Valerie Panet-Raymond**- Radiation Oncology Staff Teaching Award
- **Barbara Rivera** - Mia Neri Foundation, Young Investigator Award
- **Jan Seuntjens, Shirley Lehnert** – Appointed Ambassadors of the Palais des Congrès de Montréal
- **Jan Seuntjens** –Mirzakhanian L, Benmakhlouf H, Tessier F, **Seuntjens J. (2018) Determination of kQmsr, Q0fmsr, fref factors for ion chambers used in the calibration of Leksell Gamma Knife Perfexion model using EGSnrc and PENELOPE Monte Carlo codes**, *Med Phys.* 2018 Apr;45 (4):1748-1757. doi: 10.1002/mp.12821. Epub 2018 Mar 23. Selected for the honour of Editor's Choice article in April 2018 Issue
- **Sonia Skamene**
  - Shibata Fellowship Award
  - Class of Medicine 1970 Educational Award for Teaching Excellence and Innovation
- **Luis Souhami** – Inducted Academia de Medicina do Rio de Janeiro
- **Anna Towers** - Recognized as a Cedars Cancer Foundation Hero
- **Argerie Tsimicalis**
  - Rosemary Wedderburn Brown Prize from the Faculty of Medicine
  - Listed on the first-ever list of Canadian Women in Global Health
- FRQS Salary Awards
  - **Laurent Azoulay** - Chercheurs-boursiers
  - **Marc Fabian** - Chercheurs-boursiers
  - **Reza Forghani** - Chercheurs-boursiers cliniciens
  - **Melissa Henry** - Chercheurs-boursiers cliniciens
  - **Ives Levesque** - Chercheurs-boursiers