

This week's departmental acknowledgement goes to a tireless and enthusiastic clinician, mentor, and senior physician at the Montreal Children's Hospital – Dr. Blair Whittemore.

My first exposure to Dr. Whittemore was perhaps ten or twelve years ago when I was rounding in the PICU and I was interrupted by an unfamiliar face, who asked, "Does baby so-and-so have either high immunoglobulins or perhaps hyperfibrinogenemia? There are rouleaux on his peripheral blood smear." I was impressed. Since then, I have been similarly privileged to discuss the presence of Dohle bodies (sepsis) and even Howell-Jolly bodies (hyposplenism) on various patient blood smears with him. I won't even go into the coagulation cascade—mostly because I am not capable of doing so—but suffice it to say that Dr. Whittemore and I have had many discussions on Factors V, VIII, and von Willebrand's factor over the years. When there are important findings to discuss on a hematology lab test, Dr. Whittemore is there, in person, the embodiment of seamless bench to bedside knowledge translation. His ability to demystify laboratory medicine and to role model the correlation between laboratory tests and clinical medicine in clinical decision making has greatly enriched the learning of students, residents, fellows, and staff alike.

It turns out that when blood leaves the body and goes through an ECMO or VAD circuit, REALLY, REALLY strange and complex things happen to platelets and clotting factors, so much so that a bona fide subspecialty area of expertise, that of extracorporeal hematology has emerged. I am constantly amazed by the complexity and plethora (pardon the pun!) of tests required to get a handle on this important aspect of the care of the patient with an extracorporeal circuit. Dr. Whittemore's willingness to impart his considerable wisdom in this domain has been greatly appreciated and has enhanced the care of our ECMO and VAD patients alike.

Finally, many of us don't know this, but Dr. Whittemore has had a whole past life as the Director of Professional Services at the Montreal General Hospital, and carries with him all of the experience that comes with that job. I have served with him on review committees and have accessed his sage advice on many matters administrative over the years. At the risk of flooding his office with colleagues, I would recommend him highly to any member of the department seeking discreet and skilful advice on how to negotiate our complex organization and the human beings who work within it.

For all these reasons, I am sure that all of you will join me in celebrating Dr. Whittemore's 45 years at this institution through this departmental acknowledgment!

Sincerely,

Saleem Razack