"You can observe a lot by just watching"

Yogi Berra

This week's Departmental Acknowledgment goes to Constantin Polychronakos on the stupendous occasion of his election to the Royal Society of Canada.

Established in 1882 by an Act of the Canadian Parliament, the Society combines the Academies of Arts, Humanities and Sciences of Canada and is the senior national pre-eminent collegium of distinguished scientists, scholars and artists. Its efforts are directed at promoting learning and research, scholarly accomplishment, mentoring future scholars and artists, recognizing excellence and advising governments, non-governmental organizations and the Canadian public on matters of general interest to our collective society.

Constantin is currently a Professor (with tenure) in the Department of Pediatrics at McGill University. He served for fifteen years as Director of our Division of Pediatric Endocrinology. As a Division Director, he ably led his Division to prominence in all domains of our academic mission; clinical service, outreach, education and research (basic and clinical). As Chair, I can attest to Constantin’s selfless and steady attention to the continued professional development of his Division members and peers while he was Division Director. He has recently replaced his leadership role as Division Director by taking an even more substantial position in our hospital-based research efforts as the leader for the Child Health and Human Development Program of the MUHC-RI.

As a clinician, Constantin has been a long-standing devoted care provider to children with endocrinologic disorders, and in particular those with insulin dependent diabetes. It is Constantin’s clinical practice that has informed his remarkable scientific accomplishments and leadership. Constantin’s investigative efforts have been focused at the bench on the elucidation of the genetic basis and mechanisms for diabetes mellitus. This has occurred within the context of a revolution in molecular biology that has seen the rapid introduction of new technologies and the quick dispatch to the dustbin of that which has been replaced. Throughout this revolution with its rapidly shifting floor, Constantin has stood firm in his quest.

He has demonstrated an ability to adapt and integrate new technologies into his efforts, continually pushing the envelope of what we know, setting up the next step in his ongoing efforts towards further understanding. To a fellow investigator, this methodologic flexibility and adaptability over time is astonishing.
Constantin's journey of discovery has been supported by prior and current external funding support from a multitude of funding sources. All appear eager to back a proven 'winner'. External funding sources have included; CIHR, NIH, Genome Canada, Genome Quebec, Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, Canadian Diabetes Association. His success is evident in over 125 peer-reviewed publications. A significant proportion of these are in high impact factor journals, including multiple Senior Author contributions to *Nature* and *Nature Genetics*. Constantin's leadership amongst his peers is evident by his Editor-in-Chief post since 2009 at the Journal of Medical Genetics (IF 6.4), a rare honor for a clinician-investigator.

Not surprisingly Constantin's track record of success has garnered both local and national awards. These include Awards for Research Excellence (2005) from our hospital foundation and salary support (2008-2013) as well as career recognition Awards from the *Fondation de la recherche sur les maladies infantiles* (2008) and the Canadian Pediatric Society (2009). He was also honoured last year by induction as a Fellow into the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences.

Also not surprisingly, Constantin's success and his easy-going manner and approachability have attracted a steady stream of students and fellows. Close to 30 graduate students and fellows over the years have benefited from Dr. Polychronakos' guidance, expertise and mentorship, as an initial or subsequent step in their own individual pathway to success as child-health researchers. A review of Constantin's CV reveals that with his involvement, his students and fellows were able to achieve their goals as witnessed by their successful publication of their own bench research while under his tutelage. For many, the years with Constantin were an essential catalyst for their own careers as independent investigators.

Constantin's election to the Royal Society brings him into the august company of two other current Departmental members (*Michael Kramer* and *Rima Rozen*) and three Emeritus members (*Frederick Andermann, F Clarke Fraser and Charles Scriver*).

Please join me in congratulating Constantin on this remarkable and well-deserved personal accomplishment.

Have a great weekend everyone!

Michael

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