

December 9, 2016

Everything is theoretically impossible, until it is done.

Robert A. Heinlein

Hi Everyone,

This Departmental Acknowledgement has been hanging around in the "To Do" file for a little while and I will apologize up front for this delay. It goes to **Jacquetta Trasler** for securing earlier this year a CIHR Foundation Grant.

All of those involved in the research 'game' are fully aware that it's a difficult, dare I say brutal, funding environment currently. For the investigator, a seven-year CIHR Foundation Grant represents the proverbial cherry on top of the cake.

Jacquetta has a long record of research excellence and funding success. Her present grant is on the theme of developmental epigenetics and the prevention of birth defects. Broadly speaking, epigenetics concerns itself with how the environment and social factors modifies our genome, without altering the DNA sequence, to change genetic expression and phenotype. Jacquetta's fundamental work, which includes mouse models, focuses on the substantial segment of our population (an estimated 10-20%) that experience infertility and require the use of varied assisted reproductive technologies to conceive a child. Unfortunately, these children are at risk for enhanced adverse outcomes that are thought to be the result of epigenetic changes. Jacquetta's work is directed at figuring out the underlying mechanisms for these changes and exploring possible ways of preventing eventual birth defects. I can anticipate that her findings may be generalizable to non-ART settings of conception.

Jacquetta received a Departmental Acknowledgement in February 2015 (see below) for her leadership role in the transition of our basic research efforts to the Glen site as part of the MUHC-RI. Please join me in congratulating her on her present granting success.

Have a great weekend everyone!

Michael

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February 27, 2015

"And I'll stand on the ocean until I start sinking"

Bob Dylan

Hi Everyone,

*This week, the first vanguard of the MCH community moved to the Glen Site. These are our basic researchers who will populate the site's 'state of the art' new Centre for Translational Biology (CTB). For leading this move (the preparations for which has extended over several years), this week's Departmental Acknowledgement goes to **Jacquetta Trasler**.*

Jacquetta began her involvement in this enterprise as the Scientific Director of the Montreal Children' Hospital in 2007. Over time, with administrative restructuring, her position has morphed into that of being the Director for Pediatric Research and Deputy Executive Director/Deputy Chief Scientific Officer of the Research Institute of the MUHC. In this role, Jacquetta has been the 'voice' of the entire pediatric research community, both clinical and basic, in multiple forums. These have been challenging times at multiple levels and Jacquetta has always been there to put the needs of the Children on the table, front and foremost. Much of her time these past few years has been devoted to the myriad details of the move, which is complicated, to say the least, from aspects of space assignment, adjacencies, access to core facilities, and the health and safety of animal research populations. The goal at all times was assuring the vitality of pediatric research and minimizing disruptions to ongoing research efforts. At many times during the process this was a thankless task, but we would be quite remiss in not actually thanking Jacquetta publicly and explicitly for these efforts.

Jacquetta is a McGill MDCM graduate who after a few years of clinical training (Ob/Gyn) switched completely to basic research obtaining a PhD in pharmacology with a MRC funded post-doctoral fellowship at Tufts. Intriguingly, her research focus has, throughout her career, been on the effects of external factors on embryonic development and gametogenesis, in particular that of spermatogenesis (an interesting turn for someone originally in Ob/Gyn). She has embraced new technologies and scientific advances as they emerged to deepen her study of her chosen field. Currently, she focuses on epigenetics as expressed in alterations in established DNA methylation patterns and the developmental origins of adult disease. Evidence of the impact of her work is reflected in a long string of awards and external recognition including the full gamut of FRQ-S salary support awards (including Chercheur Nationaux), the 2000 Prix d'Excellence for significant contributions to child health research, the Young Andrologist Award for the American Society of Andrology, the 2009 Aldo Award for Excellence in Pediatric Research, and the R Howard Webster Foundation Award for research in reproductive medicine. Previously a William Dawson Scholar of McGill University, she is currently at the beginning of her second term as a University James McGill Professor. She holds Professorial status in three Departments of the Faculty of Medicine: Pediatrics, Pharmacology & Therapeutics and Human Genetics.

Jacquetta has over 100 peer-reviewed publications and a long history of continuous peer reviewed external funding support. In a most difficult competitive environment, with substantial administrative responsibilities, in the past year she received renewal of her CIHR operating grant ranking second of 68 proposals reviewed in her competition as well as played a key role in a successful CIHR team grant on Boys' and Men's Health. In addition, she is Chairing the Program Committee for the upcoming 23rd North American Testis Workshop.

Jacquetta, like all successful scientists, has demonstrated a passion for, and a focus on, her scientific efforts. With the move to the Glen now accomplished, she will be stepping down very shortly from her Research Institute administrative responsibilities. A replacement has been selected and will be announced shortly.

Please join me in thanking Jacquetta for her administrative work on behalf of our research community and wishing her all the best in the next phase of her most productive career.

Have a great weekend everyone!

Michael

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