

January 20, 2017

**“Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family.”**

**Kofi Annan**

Happy New Year everyone!

Time to shake off the holidays and get the weekly Departmental Acknowledgement back up and running.

This week's Acknowledgement goes to a trio involved in care to newborns here: **Alexandre Barbier, May Khairy and Pia Wintermark**. It's for their efforts in family-centered care through knowledge mobilization and patient empowerment.

For the vast majority of parents, term birth results in a normal child. Sometimes however, things can go suddenly and horrifically wrong with the newborn suffering a substantial lack of oxygen delivery to the brain. This can result in signs of neurologic injury both acutely (ie seizures) or in the long term (ie cerebral palsy, developmental delay). Until less than a decade ago, there was little we could do acutely to reduce the likelihood of an adverse outcome. However, borrowing from the experience of the adult world, several studies demonstrated that therapeutic hypothermia, involving the reduction of body temperature to 34 degrees Celsius for three days initiated within 6 hours of birth, may lessen the later risk of cerebral palsy in survivors of moderate birth asphyxia. The NICU at the MCH was one of the first regional cooling centres to get up and running in Canada and it is rare now not to have at least one newborn being cooled at any time in our unit.

For a parent expecting a normal birth and outcome, to be thrust into a NICU and to watch your child being cooled and hooked up to a myriad of monitors is a scary and unsettling thing that is a far cry from the usual joy and bonding that follows birth. This is even further aggravated by the uncertainty of what the future will be for the child and family.

Alexandre, a neonatologist and educator, May a pediatrician in our neonatal follow-up clinic, and Pia a neonatologist and clinician scientist with a robust investigative program in brain injury, brought their collective expertise and varying perspectives together to fashion an animated movie and an informative website to help inform parents finding themselves with a child being treated with therapeutic hypothermia. Knowledge is power and in this situation enables parents caught up in a most challenging context to better understand what exactly is going on. One would assume that this would help reduce parental stress and anxiety, enable better participation in care decisions and probably improve outcomes. Our trio received a well-deserved prize from the CIHR Institute for Human Development Child and Youth Health for their efforts.

I have pasted below links to the English and French versions. Unfortunately I have my concerns whether these links will work on the ancient MUHC browsers. I have also pasted the website.

<https://youtu.be/w8-wGLnUzls>

<https://youtu.be/GRTI2mTP1MI>

[www.neobrainparents.org](http://www.neobrainparents.org)

Please join me in congratulating Alexandre, May and Pia on their work and prize.

Have a great weekend everyone!

Michael

Michael Shevell, MDCM, FRCPC, FCAHS  
Chairman, Department of Pediatrics  
Professor (with Tenure)  
Departments of Pediatrics and Neurology/Neurosurgery  
McGill University

Guyda Chair in Pediatrics

Pediatrician-in-Chief  
Montreal Children's Hospital/  
McGill University Health Centre (MUHC)

Follow Me on Twitter: @McGillPeds