

March 12, 2021

Hi Everyone,

In a week that includes International Women's Day, I would be remiss if I did not feature exceptional women in our Department who recently received peer-recognition for their accomplishments. This week's Departmental Acknowledgement goes to **Pia Wintermark** and **Samara Zavalkoff**.



Pia was selected by the University as a William Dawson Scholar. Named after a transformative McGill Principal of the 19th century, the William Dawson Scholar Award is an internally competitive Award meant to recognize a scholar developing into an outstanding and original researcher of world-class caliber who is poised to become a leader in their field. The award is similar to that of a Canada Research Chair Tier 2. Pia is a neonatologist with a robust basic and clinical research program focused on the newborn brain, and especially its response to an acquired birth injury which often results in substantive long-term neurodevelopmental sequelae. Pia utilizes animal models, clinical imaging and therapeutic interventions in her search for a greater understanding of mechanisms of brain injury that will hopefully offer novel opportunities for improved outcomes. From what I know about the field, Pia is not becoming a leader in her field, she is one already.



Samara is a member who just received the Prix Marthe-Pelland from the FMSQ, the provincial organization that represents Quebec specialty physicians. This prize is given to an early career woman who has demonstrated exceptional leadership qualities and accomplishments. Samara is a member of our Division of Pediatric Critical Care who was promoted to Associate Professor just last year. She is currently the Program Director for the internationally renowned Pediatric Critical Care training program at the MCH. She is a leader in patient safety pairing much scholarly activity with her innovative clinical efforts. She co-led our pathfinding Women in Leadership Task Force together with Laurie Plotnick. She also recently founded the Canadian Women in Pediatric Critical Care Group that provides support and advocacy for women in this demanding specialty. She is also presently involved in efforts on a national level to improve organ donation with the intent of improving transplantation rates and outcomes for individuals suffering from major organ failure.

Please join me in congratulating Pia and Samara on their recent awards.

I often joke that about 10-15% of my time as Chair-Chief consists of writing letters of support for Departmental members up for recognition in the form of a promotion or award. The reality is that it is an activity that I derive much satisfaction, joy and naches from. Indeed, in addition to these weekly DAs, it is probably the Chair-Chief activity that gets the best return on my time investment.

Have a great weekend! Don't forget to 'spring' the clocks ahead on Sunday.

Michael

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