

## Medical Oncology

The medical oncology training program of McGill University meets the requirements of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, the Collège des médecins du Québec, and the American Board of Internal Medicine for Specialty Training in Medical Oncology.

The general objectives are to impart to the trainee an understanding of the basic scientific principles which relate to cancer and its treatment and to ensure that the trainee acquires clinical competence in the investigation and management of neoplastic diseases. The program follows the Competence by Design curriculum and set forth by the Royal College of Canada.

The specific learning objectives of the **two-year program** are:

- The epidemiology and natural history of cancer including causation risk factors, the biology of growth and spread and prognostic variables.
- Basic scientific knowledge including molecular biology, biochemistry, pathophysiology, pharmacology, growth kinetics, genetics, endocrinology and immunology as they relate to the understanding of cancer and its diagnosis and treatment.
- Assessment and investigations of patients with cancer, including the history, physical examination, laboratory and imaging techniques.
- Principles of cancer therapy and the indications for and complications of the various treatment modalities alone or in combination.
- Management of medical emergencies and complications which arise as a result of cancer or its treatment.
- The principles and practice of palliative symptomatic treatment of patients with cancer.
- Nutritional needs of cancer patients and the methods of management.
- Psychological and ethical aspects of treating patients with cancer and communicating with patients and their families and other members of the health care team.
- Epidemiology and biostatistics including the conduct and evaluation of clinical trials.

During the first year of the program, trainees will complete 12 months of training in medical oncology clinics. This will consist of 2 months in each of the 4 major tumour sites (breast, gastrointestinal, genitourinary, and lung cancers), 2 months in mixed tumour blocks consisting of rarer cancers (CNS, gynecological cancers, head and neck cancers, melanoma, and sarcoma), and 1 month in community oncology. The trainee will also have the opportunity to complete a 1-month elective during their first year. During this time, they will have days where they will be expected to participate in consult service in lieu of clinic (maximum 5 weekdays per month).

During the second year, the trainee will gain exposure to other areas of oncology with 1-month rotations in radiation oncology and palliative care each, in addition to 2 months of hematologic oncology exposure. They will complete an extra month of community oncology during their second year in addition to 2 months of mixed medical oncology clinics.

All calls are home calls and respect the regulations put forth by the Federation of Medical Residents of Quebec.

During the two-year program, the trainee will have the opportunity to run their own longitudinal clinic under the supervision of staff medical oncologist. They will be expected to manage their own patients and see the evolution of their cases over the span of the two years with help from their supervisor. This experience will give the trainee the exposure and skills to be able to run their own clinic by the end of their training, easing them into independent practice.

The trainee will also have the opportunity to engage in research. This may be in various areas such as clinical research, observational or metanalysis studies, quality and innovation, medical education, translational medicine, among other others. The trainee will be matched up with a research supervisor early in their training and they are expected to complete a project by the end of their second year. They will have the opportunity to submit their abstract to the annual McGill Celebration of Research and Training in Oncology abstract competition.

Every year, the trainee will be expected to write the ASCO in-training exam. This is multiple-choice exam administered by the American Society of Clinical Oncology. The exam is not used for promotion but rather to guide the trainee in addressing knowledge gaps, as a comprehensive report of the trainees performance is generated after grading of the exam. Other means of examination include, OSCE exams at the McGill Simulation Centre and journal clubs.

The program offers many mentorship opportunities including an annual career fair, opportunities to network with alumni, matching with mentors, and personalized career counseling. In addition, instruction and support are provided in many other important areas of practice such as stress management and fatigue and burnout recognition, and wellness.

The teaching hospitals involved in the training program are the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) – Glen Site (Cedars Cancer Centre), the Jewish General Hospital (Segal Cancer Centre) and Saint Mary's Hospital Center.

Requests for further information and application forms should be directed to:

Dr. Victoria Mandilaras, Program Director  
McGill University Health Centre  
Medical Oncology  
Cedars Cancer Centre  
1001 Decarie Boulevard  
Montreal, Quebec H4A 3J1

Program Coordinator: 514-398-2264; [oncologysec.med@mcgill.ca](mailto:oncologysec.med@mcgill.ca)