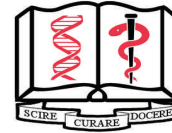


# VITAL SIGNS



THE NEWSLETTER OF MCGILL UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE

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## WORD FROM THE CHAIR

*Dr. David Eidelman, MD  
Chair, Department of Medicine*



### NOW WHAT?

In this issue of the Newsletter, we report the accomplishments of many of our members who have successfully obtained salary awards or have been the recipients of other prizes. These successes are a demonstration of our department's well-known excellence, which is the fruit of the hard work of many individuals spread over decades. However, the success of our department also reflects our ability to successfully adapt to the needs of the society in which we find ourselves. That society is about to change radically as a consequence of two irresistible forces: demographics and economics. As in the past, to ensure that we continue to excel, we will need to adapt to these new realities.

For the latter half of the last century, the western world has been governed by the demographic phenomenon known as the "baby-boomers". As with everything else, once they become its major consumers, the boomers will dominate the health care system, bending its resources to their needs. Long predicted, this is no longer a far off event. Boomers will start to have a major impact on the health care system as soon as 2010, a year during which the first boomer will turn 65. Moreover, the importance of this demographic time bomb is greater in Quebec where the birth rate is insufficient to prevent a decline in the population. Thus, as the need for care by the elderly peaks, the numbers of potential caregivers will decline.

This demographic shift coincides with another epochal event, the start of the end of the oil economy. During the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century we exploited apparently infinite supplies of cheap oil, which provided us with a source of abundant energy as well as the raw materials for the technology explosion of recent years. While recent increases in oil prices are at least in part caused by speculation, we can already see evidence of the end of the petroleum era in the daily decisions of consumers, corporations and governments. We are only starting to perceive how these changes will shake up the health care system and biomedical research.

While all of this has been known for years, we remain in denial. For example, despite the enormous effect these events will have on their careers, our students and residents are still being trained in the traditional way, with only the vaguest notion of the major change that is coming. Similarly, does our research address the needs of an aging population that lives in a world vastly different from the one in which it grew up? At best, only to a limited degree and then only in specialized research domains such as aging and geriatrics. We certainly haven't come to grips with economic changes that will soon buffet us.

What shall we do? At the very least we need to start a conversation about these issues and allow them to inform planning within the department. For example we must begin to look at ways to adjust our teaching so as to prepare our students and residents for the world in which they will actually practice. We also need to invest in the research that will allow us to efficiently use our increasingly sparse resources. This applies not only to health outcomes and population health, but also to translational research, which will have to adjust to a different economic environment and to different expectations from government and the population at large.



## THE MCGILL NUTRITION AND FOOD SCIENCE CENTRE

*Dr. Errol Marliss  
Professor and  
Director of the McGill  
Nutrition and Food  
Science Center*

The McGill Nutrition and Food Science Centre has 50 members from the Faculties of Medicine and of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, 18 of whom are in the Department of Medicine. Its goals are to promote research, education and clinical / population concerns across the broad scope of food and nutrition, basic and clinical. Having passed its quarter-century mark, the Centre can claim major accomplishments in all three domains. At the Centre's physical base, the RVH Crabtree Nutrition Laboratory, there have been 8 faculty (3 now full professors elsewhere) who obtained \$21 million in research funding, and have published over 300 research papers, 500 abstracts and 100 reviews. They have trained 34 graduate students, 23 postdoctoral fellows and 58 summer research students.

The principal Crabtree Laboratory research theme focuses on why whole-body and muscle protein metabolism are abnormal in aging and in persons with obesity and type 2 diabetes. The team of Réjeanne Gougeon, José A. Morais, Stéphanie Chevalier, and Errol Marliss has firmly established the concept that all have insulin resistance of protein anabolism, concurrent with the known resistance of glucose and fat metabolism. Stéphanie Chevalier is presently studying why cancer patients lose a disproportionate amount of lean tissue, and is leading the group's quest for steps in the biochemical pathways of muscle protein synthesis and breakdown that are responsible for the abnormalities in all these epidemic conditions. This work has implications for developing appropriate individualized diets and drug interventions to protect muscle mass and function. Jean-François Yale is highly sought-after internationally to direct and advise on development, design and execution of clinical trials in diabetes. He has been pivotal in

establishing the MUHC as a key site for several groundbreaking trials that have changed diabetes practice, including nutrition interventions. Furthermore, bringing Department members together with Centre members across McGill has catalyzed many research collaborations and consultations.

Since its inception, the Centre has prioritized nutrition education in the medical curriculum. Raising consciousness of the roles of nutrition in health maintenance, disease prevention and treatment has been the goal with over 2,500 graduates to date. Nutrition components exist in the early Units of the curriculum, in Clinical Nutrition seminars in Med 4, and in resident teaching activities.

The Centre added obesity and lipid clinics to those for diabetes already established at the RVH Metabolic Day Centre. The inpatient Nutrition Support Service was expanded and the Home Total Parental Nutrition program started, under the aegis Centre members in the Department of Medicine. José Morais has had a major impact in "nutrition consciousness" and collaborative research in the Division of Geriatric Medicine and among other Québec faculties.

Many Centre members have served on Québec and Canadian grant review panels, in executive roles in national organizations, and Réjeanne Gougeon has been the Centre's nutrition spokesperson for the media. Working with diabetes organizations, Jean-François Yale and Réjeanne Gougeon have had nationwide impacts in establishing and continuously updating the world's first evidence-based guidelines for diabetes management, including nutrition recommendations.

The Centre embarks on its next quarter-century with high hopes of sustaining and extending its accomplishments, in anticipation of all its efforts being enhanced within the new and refurbished walls of the MUHC!



# PROMOTIONS and AWARDING OF TENURE

Congratulations to the following members of our Department

## FULL PROFESSORS

### Dr. Mark Eisenberg

Dr. Eisenberg is internationally recognized for his work on the epidemiology of cardiovascular disease, clinical practice, medication use and resource utilization.

### Dr. Danielle Malo

Dr. Malo is an international leader in the field of host resistance with specific interest in the host response to bacterial infection, using murine models to study the genetics of response to acute and chronic infection.

## ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS (WITH TENURE)

### Dr. Volker Blank

Dr. Blank studies the role of transcription factors in gene regulation and oncogenesis.

### Dr. Paul Brassard

Dr. Brassard is an expert in public health and a clinical researcher who studies the epidemiology of tuberculosis and other disorders.

### Dr. Deborah Da Costa

Dr. Da Costa is an expert in behavioural medicine as applied in the field of clinical research related to chronic diseases,

including systemic lupus erythematosus and coronary artery disease.

### Dr. Ken Dewar

Dr. Dewar is an expert in genomics and Acting Director of the McGill University and Genome Quebec Innovation Centre.

### Dr. Carolyn Ells

Dr. Ells is an expert in bioethics and is President of the Ethics Committee at the JGH.

### Dr. James Engert

Dr. Engert is an expert in the genetics of complex traits as applied to lipid disorders and cardiovascular disease.

### Dr. Elizabeth Fixman

Dr. Fixman's work is in translational biology as applied to the respiratory system.

### Dr. Marina Klein

Dr. Klein is a clinical researcher who is an expert on the epidemiology of chronic viral infections, particularly HIV and hepatitis C.

### Dr. Anne-Marie Lauzon

Dr. Lauzon is an expert in the molecular biophysics of contractile proteins and the relationship of airway smooth muscle mechanics to asthma.

### Dr. Jun-Li Liu

Professor Liu is an expert in the field of the molecular biology of pancreatic islet cells and the pathogenesis of diabetes mellitus.

### Dr. José Morais

Dr. Morais is a clinical researcher who conducts research on protein metabolism in the context of aging, obesity and diabetes.

### Dr. Elham Rahme

Dr. Rahme is an expert in the field of pharmacoepidemiology, particularly as applied to inflammatory joint diseases.

## AWARDED TENURE

### Dr. Anne Gatignol, Associate Professor

Dr. Gatignol is an expert in the field of retroviruses, with a specific interest in the role of viral and host factors determining the replication of HIV.

### Dr. John Kimoff, Associate Professor

Dr. Kimoff is a clinical researcher who studies the pathogenesis of obstructive sleep apnea.



## NEW FRSQ-MSSS-MUHC RESEARCH CHAIR

Congratulations to **Dr. James Brophy** who has been awarded the very first [Research Chair in Technology Assessment and Evidence-based Medicine](#) in the amount of \$100,000 annually for 5 years. This Research Chair program is funded in partnership between the FRSQ, the *ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux* (MSSS) and Québec's University Hospital Centres.

## AT LAST, ApoB



Recently, the American College of Cardiology and the American Diabetes Association officially recognized apolipoprotein B (ApoB) as a cardiovascular risk factor that should be a part of routine screening. This recognition of ApoB is particularly significant for one member of the Department who has worked in the field of dyslipidemias since the beginning of his career. Former Director of the Cardiology Division at the RVH, **Dr. Allan Sniderman** is currently Director of the Mike Rosenbloom Laboratory for Cardiovascular Research at the RVH and Edwards Professor of Cardiology. Dr. Sniderman started studying ApoB in the 1980's and has been its champion for many years. The recognition of ApoB by the ACC and the ADA is an excellent example of the international impact of our research. Dr. Sniderman remains an active researcher; studying the role of adipose tissue as a determinant of the flux of fatty acids and developing advanced algorithms for the identification and treatment of those at elevated risk for vascular disease. We congratulate Dr. Sniderman and wish him every success in his work.

## NEWS FROM ST. MARY'S



The Ministry has approved the construction of a new dialysis unit at [St. Mary's Hospital Center](#) at a cost of approximately 5.2 million dollars. This unit will greatly expand the current space allotted to dialysis. The current program currently serves about 80 hemodialysis patients and a smaller number undergoing peritoneal dialysis. The new project will provide space for three nephrologists, a pre dialysis clinic and other complementary services. The design includes the potential to accommodate the ever-increasing number of patients with chronic renal failure.

We are also pleased to report that the Ministry has granted St. Mary's the *Centre hospitalier affilié universitaire* (CHA-U) status, which has been a goal of St. Mary's for many years. Under this status, the Ministry has specified that St. Mary's expand research activities and increase teaching in the areas of internal medicine and obstetrics.

## APPOINTMENTS



**Dr. Tim Meagher** has taken on the newly created position of Associate Executive Director, Medical Affairs – McGill. Dr. Meagher's task is to coordinate clinical and educational activities of the physician staff of the MUHC while at the same time ensuring that the decisions taken today and over the next few years reflect our clinical and educational goals.



**Dr. Morag Park** has been appointed as Scientific Director of the CIHR's Institute of Cancer Research, effective August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008. Professor in the Departments of Biochemistry, Oncology and Medicine, Dr. Park is a James McGill Professor and Director of the McGill's Molecular Oncology Group. She is considered an international leader in understanding the mechanisms underlying activation in human cancer.

## HONOURS



On June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008, **Dr. Louise Pilote**, James McGill Professor and Director of the

Division of General Internal Medicine, will be presented with the **Faculty Honour for Educational Excellence Award** in recognition of her outstanding contributions to education in the health professions at McGill.

Congratulations to **Ms. Elisa Monaco**, Administrative and Student Affairs Coordinator for the Dermatology and Emergency Medicine Residency Training Programs, who is the inaugural recipient of the **Pamela Chase Award** in 2008. This award is one of the Dean of Medicine Awards of Excellence and recognizes the excellence, hard work, determination and dedication of Faculty of Medicine support staff.



## MUHC DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE AWARDS

Congratulations to this year's recipients who were recognized at the MUHC Departmental Annual Dinner on Thursday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2008.

### Physician-in-Chief Award

For highly distinguished service to the MUHC Department

- **Dr. Linda Snell**

### Department of Medicine Award for Innovation in Clinical Care or Quality

- **Dr. Jeffrey Wiseman** and the 6-Medical Patient Discharge Navigator Team
- **Dr. Bernard Unikowsky**

### Department of Medicine Award

For Research by a Core Internal Medicine Resident

- **Dr. Benjamin Smith**

### Department of Medicine Award

For Research by a Subspecialty Resident

- **Dr. Susan Poelman**

### Department of Medicine Staff Research Award

- **Dr. Geoffrey Hendy**
- **Dr. Allan Sniderman**

### The Louis G. Johnson Award

For excellence in Teaching by a Medical Resident – selected by RVH Residents

- **Dr. Benjamin Smith**

### The Lorne E. Cassidy Teaching Award

For Excellence in Teaching by a Medical Resident – selected by MGH Residents

- **Dr. Anna Rahmani**

### The Douglas G. Kinnear Award

Outstanding Clinician-Teacher at the MUHC

- **Dr. Tiina Podymow**

### The W.H. Philip Hill Award

Outstanding Clinician-Teacher at the MUHC

- **Dr. Laurence Green**

The JGH Department of Medicine Staff and Residents Awards Year-End Party will take place on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008 and we will announce the awardees in the September 2008 issue of our newsletter.

## SALARY AWARDS

Congratulations to our faculty members for these salary awards.

### CIHR Clinician Scientist, Phase II – Renewal

- **Dr. Don Sheppard**

### FRSQ Chercheurs Nationaux

- **Dr. Mark Eisenberg**

### FRSQ Chercheur Boursier – Senior

- **Dr. James Brophy**
- **Dr. Chen Liang**
- **Dr. Jun-Li Liu**
- **Dr. Andrew Mouland**

### FRSQ Chercheur Boursier – Junior 1

- **Dr. Simon Rousseau**
- **Dr. Elena Torban**

### FRSQ Chercheur Boursier Clinicien – Junior 2

- **Dr. Paul Brassard**
- **Dr. Don Sheppard**
- **Dr. Vicky Tagalakis**

### FRSQ Chercheur Boursier Clinicien – Junior 1

- **Dr. Andrea Benedetti**

## CFI AWARDS

The Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), through the Leaders Opportunity Fund has awarded grants to our innovative McGill University research projects.

**Dr. Monzur Murshed**, Endocrinology, for *Elucidation of the Molecular Mechanisms of Tissue Mineralization in Vertebrates*.

**Dr. Robert Sladek**, Endocrinology, for *Identification of Mammalian Gene Networks Using Living Microarrays*.

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