

# VITAL SIGNS



THE NEWSLETTER OF MCGILL UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE

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*Wishing you all a very Happy Holiday Season!*



## The Times They Are A-Changing'

*- Robert Allen Zimmerman aka Bob Dylan*



*Dr. James Martin  
Chair, Department of Medicine*

It seems that we are in a season of impending accreditation on many fronts. Of particular concern to us all is the need to pass our undergraduate program review with flying colors. While major strides have been made through the efforts of the Dean and the Faculty of Medicine (Dr. Beth-Ann Cummings and many others), it cannot all be accomplished without the commitment also of the faculty members who are in the trenches doing the teaching and are causing some of the issues of non-compliance with current standards. Some of the problems require long-term solutions such as the involvement of women faculty members in leadership positions. Others are short-term goals such as ensuring a safe learning environment. Although less problematic in medicine than in other disciplines, it is important that students not feel exposed to situations of excess responsibility without appropriate support. Availability of residents and staff to support the students in the clinical environment is an essential.

Respect for the pedagogical objectives of clinical rotations is also very important. For example, during the exit interview of the medical students, it seems that directly observed physical examinations was an area for substantial improvement. The timely return of evaluations remains an issue. Without a doubt, the failure of many to use their McGill e-mail addresses is not helping communication. Have your e-mails from the Department and the Faculty forwarded to your Hotmail account if you feel that you must support Hotmail.

Our concern for an empathic and professional approach to patients prompted the creation of a workshop which Tom Hutchinson has been kindly organizing for the Department. It has a success with more than 80 members having taken the workshop to date. The acronym is [CARE](#). Please note the times of these workshops and make an effort to participate. It is an objective of the Department to extend it to everyone, although to date it has been focused on the MUHC.

Supervising graduate students is an art acquired through experience but is always marked by periods of difficulty and tension. The University is requiring all new faculty to follow a course/workshop on graduate student supervision. However the Department recognizes that problems arise also in the laboratories of senior

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investigators. For all of the members of the Department who are supervising graduate students, the Director of the Division of Experimental Medicine Dr. Anne-Marie Lauzon has organized, through the Faculty Development Office and Dr. Boillat, a workshop on graduate student supervision. Again the goal is to have all supervisors, without exception, take this workshop.

My apologies for what may seem an excessively prescriptive editorial but the times they are a changing.

Best wishes to all for a happy and peaceful holiday season.

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## Les cliniques partenaires : une alliance gagnante

*Carole Lapierre, chef de projet et adjointe à la directrice des services professionnels du CUSM*

&

*Elodie Cornier, agente de planification, programmation et recherche  
Direction des services professionnels du CUSM*

Le projet Cliniques partenaires a vu le jour au CUSM en 2015, sous une initiative conjointe avec le Ministère de la Santé. Il permet aux patients aux prises avec des maladies chroniques d'accéder dans un délai de 50 jours à un médecin de famille, leur offrant ainsi un cercle de soins complet. Le projet se concentre sur les patients résidant sur l'un des 5 territoires montréalais partenaires de l'entente (Sud-Ouest-Verdun, Dorval-Lachine-LaSalle, Ouest-de-l'Île, Cavendish, de la Montagne) et souffrant de maladie pulmonaire obstructive chronique (MPOC), d'asthme, de problèmes cardiaques (hypertension, insuffisance), de diabète ou de maladies du sang (anticoagulothérapie).

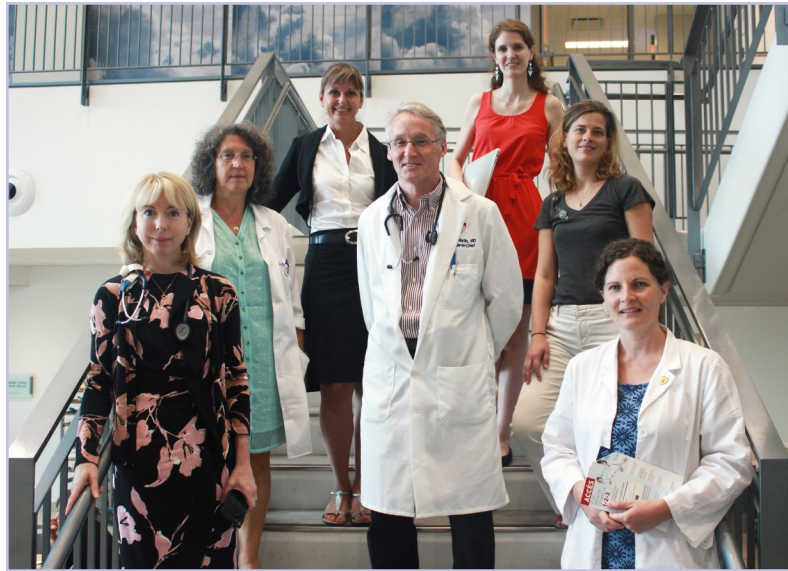


Photo: Patricia Vasquez, CUSM

*Quelques participants au projet: Margaret Warner, Irma Forlini, Carole Lapierre, James Martin, Elodie Cornier, Isabelle Ouellet et Kathryn Riches*

L'idée-clé du projet est d'avoir le bon patient, au bon endroit, au bon moment. Entre le spécialiste et le médecin de famille, le patient obtient les bénéfices des services de santé les plus adaptés à sa condition, grâce à des équipes de professionnels complètes. Le transfert des patients du CUSM ainsi dirigés vers la première ligne offre l'opportunité d'établir ce lien privilégié entre le milieu hospitalier

et la médecine familiale en GMF, pour offrir la combinaison de soins nécessaire. Le Dr James Martin, partenaire important à cette initiative, pense d'ailleurs que " le projet pourrait engendrer la possibilité d'intervenir avant que l'état de santé des patients ne se détériore, et ainsi leur éviter de revenir à l'hôpital."

Au total, ce sont 1000 patients chaque année, pendant 4 ans, qui pourront bénéficier de ce projet unique, grâce à l'implication des médecins, infirmières et personnel de soutien du CUSM et des CIUSSS partenaires. L'un des facteurs de succès du projet est d'ailleurs la participation de tous : les spécialistes du CUSM sont notamment encouragés à engager la discussion avec leurs patients, afin de leur expliquer les bénéfices d'un suivi en première ligne.

## What I Learned In Business School



*Dr. Susan Kahn*

*Professor, Division of General Internal Medicine*

*Senior Investigator, Centre for Clinical Epidemiology, Lady Davis Institute,  
Jewish General Hospital*

**J**ust over a year ago, in September 2015, I went back to school and became a full time graduate business student at the John Molson School of Business (JMSB) at Concordia University.

What possessed me to do this, you may wonder. My husband, an academic physician, certainly wondered. Why put your clinical research career in venous thrombosis on hold for a year to become a full-time student? Do you really want to slog through all that homework, work on those dreaded group projects, and have to study for exams?

Well, I felt that I needed a year of stepping aside and “thinking outside the clot”, so to speak. I had the growing sense that in my multiple, often improvised roles as leader, ideas incubator, general manager, director of human resources, marketing director and accountant for my own research program, I could benefit from returning to the classroom to learn how some of the key foundations of various business disciplines might apply to my regular day job. Similar to most physician-researchers who lead and run research programs, I previously had no formal exposure to theoretical or practical aspects of business.

So, during my sabbatical last year, I completed a Graduate Certificate in Business Administration at JMSB. This program, which is offered in partnership with the Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre, is designed for those seeking a foundation in business fundamentals to complement their degree or work experience in another field. Fellow students hailed from all sectors including science, technology, architecture and the arts, and contributed broad and diverse experiences and perspectives.

I took courses in professional business skills, organizational behaviour, financial accounting, marketing, entrepreneurship, and professional use of social media (yup, I finally learned how to use Twitter for research communications). The professors were uniformly excellent and the courses (even accounting!) were engaging and high-level. I was particularly intrigued by the remarkable parallels between developing and growing a research program and developing and growing a start-up or other entrepreneurial venture.

As my husband predicted, I did a lot of homework, spent hours doing group projects, and stressed over exams. But, I learned a ton and am certain that my business training will increase my effectiveness as a researcher and as an academic leader in current and future roles and challenges.

I am very grateful to the University and to the Department of Medicine for my sabbatical opportunity.

*Dr. Kahn was recently presented with the **Canadian Society of Internal Medicine’s (CSIM) 2016 Dr. David Sackett Senior Investigator Award**. The award recognizes excellence in research by a senior general internist and is intended to increase awareness of, and foster interest in, high quality research by general internists in Canada. Dr. Kahn is internationally recognized for her research and clinical practice in the field of venous thromboembolism. [More on this story in Med e-News.](#)*

## Wise Choice for A Sabbatical Leave



*Dr. Maida Sewitch  
Associate Professor,  
Divisions of Clinical  
Epidemiology and  
Gastroenterology,  
Department of Medicine,  
McGill University*

After 11 years of working in the Divisions of Clinical Epidemiology and Gastroenterology, it was time to break out of the routine and embark on a well-deserved sabbatical leave. I found an opportunity to work on quality of care and adherence to guidelines at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. The research project I undertook aimed to determine the extent to which radiation oncologists at the Winship Cancer Institute adhered to *Choosing Wisely* recommendations. The *Choosing Wisely* quality improvement initiative aims to reduce use of unnecessary or potentially harmful medical tests, treatments and procedures. The American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO), working with the *Choosing Wisely* campaign, recommends limiting the use of extended fractionation schemes (more than 10 radiation treatments) for pain management in individuals with bone metastases. Working with Dr. Deb Watkins Bruner, we found that over 93% of treatments delivered between 2010 and 2015 were of 10 fractions or less. We also identified predictors of non-adherence to the recommendation, and are now collaborating with staff at the Winship on ways to reduce use of hyperfractionation and increase use of single fraction therapy, which is the *Choosing Wisely Canada* recommendation. Our manuscript is nearly completed and will soon be submitted for publication. My time at Emory was productive as well as enjoyable, and much of that enjoyment is attributed to Deb and her research team. During my sabbatical leave I also contributed to university activities including mentorship events, research seminars and teaching and learning workshops, and participated in local conferences and on hospital committees. Emory University is in proximity to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Cancer Society, and I met with researchers at both organizations to discuss mutual interests in cancer screening and prevention. Given Atlanta's mild winter, it won't be difficult to maintain my new network of research colleagues.

## University Director for the Division of General Internal Medicine



**Dr. Vicky Tagalakakis** has been appointed as the **University Director for the Division of General Internal Medicine (GIM)**, beginning September 1, 2016. Dr. Tagalakakis is an Associate Professor in the Division of GIM within the Department of Medicine,

certified in internal medicine, and with a Masters in Epidemiology and Biostatistics. She has successfully established a research career focused on prevention and treatment of venous thromboembolism (VTE) in symbiosis with a clinical interest in thrombotic disorders. She is strongly committed to medical education and has been recognized for accomplishments achieved during her 12 year tenure as GIM Residency Program Director leadership. Dr. Tagalakakis will promote the development of academic activities within GIM across all the McGill sites. We wish Dr. Tagalakakis every success in her new role and take this opportunity to again thank **Dr. Louise Pilote** for a decade of energy, creativity and success in fulfilling her mandate as Division Director.

## Change of Leadership in the MUHC Division of Endocrinology & Metabolism

**Dr. Mark Sherman** will step down from his position as Interim Director of the MUHC Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism on January 1, 2017. We would like to thank Dr. Sherman for his support in this capacity for the last number of years. He has shepherded the Division through difficult times with the re-organization of services that was required by the move to the Glen and was a strong advocate for the patients and the Division. We are delighted that **Dr. Jean-François Yale** has accepted the position of **Interim Director**, effective January 1, 2017 while we continue the search for the permanent Division Director.



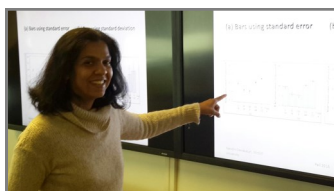
## La division de médecine expérimentale rajeunit ses cours

*Dre Anne-Marie Lauzon*

*Professeure et chercheuse, laboratoires Meakins-Christie*

*Directrice, division de médecine expérimentale*

Plusieurs nouveaux cours sont en voie d'élaboration à la division de médecine expérimentale. Entre autres, la Dre Nandini Dendukuri (photo ci-bas) donne depuis septembre 2016 un cours intitulé : **Introduction aux méthodes quantitatives de recherche**. Ce cours aborde 1) les différentes approches de recherche utilisées en médecine expérimentale, 2) le type de données qui en découlent, 3) les méthodes de



base d'analyse de ces données et 4) l'application de ces méthodes à des projets de recherche concrets des étudiants en classe. De son côté, la Dre Meredith Young présentera à partir de janvier 2017 un

cours intitulé : **Principes fondamentaux de la recherche : former et situer votre recherche**. Dans ce cours, l'étudiant apprendra à distinguer différents termes utilisés pour décrire la recherche tels que paradigme, épistémologie, approches, etc. De plus, les principes d'examen par les pairs, la recherche bibliographique, ainsi que la présentation et la dissémination des résultats seront traités. D'autre part, les Drs Martin Olivier et Momar Ndao travaillent sur un cours intitulé : **Interactions entre l'hôte et le parasite : du laboratoire au chevet du patient**. Dans ce cours, des sujets tels que l'immunologie de la malaria, de la leishmania et des helminthes seront étudiés. Ce cours traitera également de l'épidémiologie sous les tropiques, les maladies parasitaires ainsi que le développement de médicaments. Finalement, de nouveaux cours sur les vaccins et sur la recherche translationnelle seront bientôt offerts par la division. Nous sommes ravis de cette mise à jour de nos cours et souhaitons ainsi enrichir les possibilités d'apprentissage des étudiants diplômés inscrits en médecine expérimentale.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Research Symposium of the Department of Medicine of the Jewish General Hospital

*Dr. Ernesto Schiffrin*

*Physician-in-Chief, JGH Department of Medicine*

*Professor and Vice-Chair of Research, Department of Medicine, McGill University*

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 2016, the Second Annual Research Symposium of the Department of Medicine of the Jewish General Hospital (JGH) took place. The Research Symposium is held to provide an opportunity for presentation at Medical Grand Rounds by awardees of the Clinical Research Program of the JGH. This program was created in 2007 to support clinical research by CAS faculty. Currently, 28 awardees are being supported by the program, which is funded by the Practice Plan of the Department.

On this occasion, **Dr. David Langleben**, Division of Cardiology at JGH, presented his recent work on primary pulmonary hypertension with the title: "Now You Have Them, Now You Don't: Assessment of Pulmonary Microvascular Perfusion in Health and Disease".

This presentation was followed by one by **Dr. Vicky Tagalakakis**, JGH Division of Internal Medicine and the Centre for Clinical Epidemiology, Lady Davis Institute for Medical Research, on "Malignancy and Thrombosis: Going Beyond Trousseau".

The final presentation of the Symposium was by **Dr. Christina Greenaway**, JGH Division of Infectious Diseases, on "Viral Hepatitis in Immigrants: Recognizing and Decreasing the Burden".

The symposium was attended by approximately 100 members of the Department of Medicine, residents and medical students, and was considered to be an extremely successful learning opportunity that will be repeated yearly.

# First McGill Department of Medicine Clinical Symposium on High Value Care

Dr. James Martin

Photo courtesy of Caroline Alcaraz



On Friday November 11th we held the first McGill Department of Medicine Clinical Symposium on High Value Care. It was attended by more than 100 persons, drawn from different health care professions, hospital sites and departments. The audience was regaled with a series of excellent presentations from experts in the area of “choosing wisely” or appropriate use of technology and medications to support clinical practice. **Dr. Wendy Levinson** from the University of Toronto detailed the Choosing Wisely Canada program and the various levels at which overuse of testing and drugs is being addressed. The importance of education of all concerned, physicians and public alike was a cornerstone of her talk. **Dr.**

**Benoit Gallix**, Chair of Radiology at McGill, presented the problems associated with practice guidelines in radiology and the substantial overuse of imaging technologies. **Dr. Denis Roy**, Vice-President for Science and Clinical Governance at the *Institut national d'excellence en santé et en services sociaux* (INESSS), provided his vision on the potential *rayonnement* of INESSS and the desire for partnerships with institutions such as ours. **Dr. Lawrence Rosenberg** provided a high level vision of health care services in the modern age, situating the university hospital in a different context. **Dr. Todd Lee** described the newly formed Clinical Practice Assessment Unit which he leads and the various steps taken to enrich the portfolio of the Unit. **Dr. Emily McDonald** described the newly conceived and Canadian Institutes of Health Research funded National Clinical Teaching Unit trial in de-prescribing. Finally the audience was treated to a talk by **Dr. Vikas Saini**, President of the Lown Institute in Brookline, MA. He discussed the various forces leading to unnecessary care. Overall the day was an inspiring event and one we hope to reproduce next year. The Department of Medicine is grateful for the support provided by Ms. Julie Quenneville and the RVH/ MUHC Foundation. We would also like to acknowledge the efforts of the organizing committee (Dr. Gordon Crelinsten, Dr. Emily McDonald and Ms. Caroline Alcaraz).

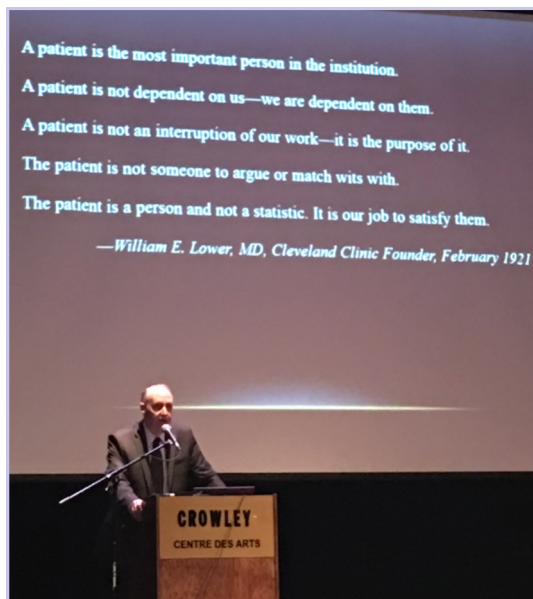


Photo courtesy of Caroline Alcaraz

## Honours



**Dr. William Foulkes**, James McGill Professor of Medicine, Human Genetics and Oncology, has been inducted as **Fellow** into the **Royal Society Canada**. [More on this story.](#)



**Dr. Brent Richards**, Associate Professor in the Division of Endocrinology and based at the JGH, has been elected to the **Royal Society of Canada College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists**. Dr.

Richards studies the genetic determinants of common, aging-related endocrine diseases, and the ways in which these findings can be applied to improving clinical care. [More on this story.](#)



The **Margolese National Heart Disorders Prize** is bestowed on **Dr. Ernesto Schiffrin**, Physician-in-Chief of the Department of Medicine at the Jewish General Hospital and Professor and Vice-Chair of Research in the Department of Medicine at McGill

University, who has advanced understanding of high blood pressure's effects on vasculature. [More on this story.](#)



**Dr. Robyn Tamblyn** and three members of her lab, **Ms. Jenna Wong** (PhD student), **Dr. Aude Motulsky** (post-doctoral fellow) and **Ms. Nadyne Girard** (research assistant - absent from photo)

at McGill University, the Clinical and Health Informatics Research Group, have won a **Data Impact Challenge award from Canada Health Infoway** earlier this year.



**Dr. Jeffrey Wiseman**, Assistant Professor in the Division of General Internal Medicine (GIM), was recently presented with the **Canadian Society of Internal**

**Medicine's (CSIM) 2016 Osler Award**. This award is presented annually to individuals demonstrating excellence in achievement in the field of GIM, either in clinical practice, research, medical education, specialty development or health promotion.

### Two Department of Medicine members among the 2016 Canadian Academy of Health Sciences New Fellows



**Dr. Marcel Behr**, Professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases and Director of the McGill International TB Centre and Microbiologist-in-Chief at the McGill University Health Centre, applies bacterial genetics to track

TB with DNA-fingerprints and to identify virulence factors of the bacterium that causes TB.



**Dr. Susan Kahn** is a Professor in the Division of General Internal Medicine and Founding Director of the JGH's Centre of Excellence in Thrombosis and Anticoagulation Care and the McGill Thrombosis Fellowship Program. Her internationally-

recognized research focuses on prevention and treatment of venous thromboembolism.

## In Memoriam

*This tribute was prepared from material on the following website:*  
[www.tributetojohnbeck.org](http://www.tributetojohnbeck.org)



*Photo courtesy of Arlene Fink*

**Dr. John C. Beck** passed away in Perth, Australia on September 29, 2016 at the age of 92.

Dr. Beck was a distinguished academic and former Physician-in-Chief of the Royal Victoria Hospital. He also served as Chair of the Department of Medicine at McGill University. Dr. Beck received his BSc., MSc., Diploma in Medicine, and M.D.C.M. degrees at McGill University, winning the coveted Holmes Gold Medal for the most outstanding performance in his graduating class. His training in many top-class institutions prepared him for his pioneering work in basic and clinical endocrine research on the pituitary and adrenal glands, hormonal changes in pregnancy, the gastrointestinal hormones influencing pancreatic endocrine function and the hormonal control of adipose tissue metabolism. He published excellently and was honored by many professional societies; he held membership in the National Academy of Medicine and he was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He was given a PhD (honoris causa) from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and a D.Sc. (honoris causa) from McGill University. Dr. Beck had a broad range of concerns beyond his research interests, including the delivery of medical services and the social responsibility of the profession. He will be remembered by many as an iconic figure who had a major impact on the lives of many.

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Please address questions or comments regarding the newsletter to [josee.p.cloutier@muhc.mcgill.ca](mailto:josee.p.cloutier@muhc.mcgill.ca).

The Department of Medicine's number of successes is prolific. Although every attempt is made to acknowledge them all at the time we go "to press", some announcements may be delayed. Do not hesitate to contact us to let us know of your successes.