

Hi Everyone

One thing that makes us different is the research intensity of McGill that is readily apparent throughout the Faculty of Medicine and our own Department of Pediatrics. Not only do we have a mandate to provide evidence-based cutting edge care to newborns, infants, children and youth and train the next generation of health care professionals, but we also have a duty to advance what is known about issues pertaining to child health so that understanding, care and outcomes can be improved.

The first two Departmental Acknowledgments are "Chair picks" suggested by both two impressive achievements that crossed my desk this week and the observation made in academia that the Professor is frequently not know in his/her own house. The first goes to Michael Kramer who very shortly will be ending his term as Scientific Director of the CIHR's Institute of Human Development, Child and Youth Health. A member of both the Department of Pediatrics and the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Michael is one of the world's foremost perinatal epidemiologists with over 300 publications to his credit and prodigious success at operational grant support. He has over his career contributed enormously to furthering our understanding of preterm births, intrauterine growth restriction and the determinants of infant mortality. His work on the multiple benefits of breast feeding and its optimal duration is in large part the basis for the World Health Organization's (WHO) current recommendations on infant feeding. That Michael has been able to continue his incredible scientific productivity and contributions while being administratively responsible for the major source of funding for child health research nationally is nothing short of astounding. Michael steps down from his CIHR position with the New Year. There is no retirement planned and I look forward to enabling in whatever way I can his future contributions to our Department and University.

The second acknowledgement is a very personal one and goes to Annette Majnemer. An occupational therapist by training, Annette pursued a PhD when this was not something rehabilitation therapists did. She has made her research home here at the MCH as an Associate Member of the Department of Pediatrics. Her research has focused on clinical populations of newborns, infants and children either at-risk for, or having, neurodevelopmental disabilities focusing on such topics as understanding outcomes from a more holistic perspective including issues such as Quality of Life and participation. Currently she is Director of the School of Physical and Occupational Therapy and an Associate Dean in the Faculty of Medicine. Despite this significant administrative load she remains very much engaged and productive in terms of her investigator driven research efforts. The acknowledgement for Annette is given this week for her award of membership in the American Occupational Therapy Foundation Academy of Research which is the highest scholarly honor of this organization. This is another notch in Annette's belt and is in addition to her Muriel Driver Award from the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapy (that organization's highest professional honor) and her selection to Fellowship in the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences.

The final Acknowledgement is tinged with sadness and was suggested by David Rosenblatt amongst many others and goes to a former Chair of our department Mary Ellen Avery, who passed away this week at the age of 84. It is fitting in light of the above two acknowledgments as the past is always a prologue to the present and future. Dr Avery was probably the key individual responsible for the research driven transformation of our Department when she was Chair from 1969-1974, I will reproduce what David sent me about Dr Avery as he was a witness as a young resident to the local culture change she brought:

The Faculty of Medicine and the Department of Pediatrics of McGill University has learned with great sadness of the death of Mary Ellen Avery, MD at the age of 84. A true internationally recognized giant and pioneer in academic medicine and neonatology, Dr. Avery served as Chair of Pediatrics at McGill and Physician-in-Chief of the Montreal Children Hospital from 1969-1974. Her tenure was a time of substantial academic growth

at McGill in areas relating to the health of children. She was a superb model and mentor for all, and particularly to women interested in academic medicine at the highest level. Subsequent to her term at McGill, she went on to be the first woman to Chair of a major clinical department at Harvard Medical School and the first pediatrician to serve as president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. She had an immense influence on a generation of pediatricians and will be deeply missed. McGill and the Montreal Children's Hospital are proud to have her as a piece of our history.

Dr Avery's seminal contribution was the elucidation of the relationship of pulmonary surfactant to respiratory distress syndrome. I am sure that not a minute goes by on this planet when a prematurely born infant is not benefitting from this scientific advance. It is also a powerful example of how research makes a difference. From a personal perspective it is very humbling to occupy her office currently.

Have a nice weekend everyone.

Michael

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