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SPOTLIGHT



Terry Fox New Investigator Award

Lucas Mendez MD is one of seven Canadians awarded a 2024 Terry Fox New Investigator Award for "Microultrasound technology in prostate radiotherapy - Seeking macro-advances through visualization of the micro." Dr. Mendez is a radiation oncologist at the Verspeeten Family Cancer Centre, and an Associate Scientist at London Health Research Institute and will receive \$450,000 over 3 years to support his research study.



Royal College Appoints New CEO

Christopher John Watling MD FRCPC MMed PhD appointed CEO Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and of Royal College International. Dr. Watling is a professor in the Departments of Oncology, Clinical Neurological Sciences and Family Medicine. A well-recognized leader in postgraduate medical education and educational scholarship, Dr. Watling is uniquely positioned to help the Royal College meet its vision of advancing learning for specialist physicians to deliver the best health care for all.



Canadian Melanoma Network honours Dr. Scott Ernst

Dr. Scott Ernst, medical oncologist at Verspeeten Family Cancer Centre was honoured for his many years of Exemplary Research, Teaching and Clinical Service in Melanoma across Canada at the 18th Annual Canadian Melanoma Conference. Dr. Ernst's achievements have been many over his career. One of the most significant to date is the founding of the Canadian Melanoma Network and co-founding the Global Melanoma Research Network.

CONGRATULATIONS

Faculty Recognitions

Rasna Gupta MD receives 2024 Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry - Windsor Campus Peer Support Award.

Mansour Haeryfar PhD receives 2024 Intersect Fellowships for Computational Scientists and Immunologist Award from American Association of Immunologists.

Sara Kuruvilla MD and **Anthony Nichols MD** London's liver cancer and head and neck cancer trial selected by Ontario Institute for Cancer Research (OICR) to join the Window-of-Opportunity (WOO) Network. Results are expected to provide preliminary evidence to support further evaluation of their approach in larger clinical trials.

Saman Maleki PhD receives 2024 Dean's Award of Excellence - Researcher of the Year.

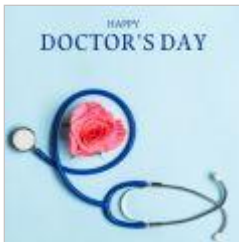
Joe Mymryk PhD recognized as an outstanding reviewer during CIHR Fall 2023 Project Grant Competition. Also recognized as a "Top Peer Reviewer" by the [Journal of Virology](#) for 2023.

Jim Petrik PhD named Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in Translational Health & Clinical Research. Petrik's primary appointment is with Guelph University. Dr. Petrik is an adjunct professor in the Schulich Medicine & Dentistry, Department of Oncology.

Frank Prato PhD receives 2024 Dean's Awards of Excellence of Faculty - Distinguished Leader in Research.

Eugene Wong PhD receives 2024 Edward G. Pleva Award for Excellence in Teaching.

WELLNESS AND RESILIENCY



National Doctors Day

May 1 is Canada's National Doctors Day. Clinicians in the Verspeeten Family Cancer Centre received a beverage coupon to thank them for their service.

Article: Mental Health and Wellness Challenges in Higher Education: A Comparison of Students in Three Countries. [The International Journal of Health, Wellness, and Society](#), February 2024.

NEWS AND STORIES

Faculty Continuing Professional Development

Sign up for the one-day, in-person physician focused [conference](#) on the topic of artificial intelligence and healthcare titled: HEAL 2024: Healthcare Enhanced by AI & Learning. Wednesday June 19.

Faculty News

Alison Allan PhD selected to serve as a member of the Canadian Cancer Society's National Advisory Council on Research (CCS ACOR).

Silvia Penuela PhD was invited to present "Cancer cell signalling through pannexin channels" at the University of Miami Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center in April.

Lisa Porter PhD attended a roundtable hosted by Honourable Filomena Tassi, Minister responsible for Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario. Dr. Porter engaged in discussions about strategic visioning for research within the OHA, as well as the future vision of a Community of Practice for coordination of research among Ontario hospitals.

Bekim Sadikovic PhD participated in Research Canada's Virtual Rare Disease Panel in February. In attendance were parliamentarians and policy makers.

Immuno-Oncology Symposium

The Translational Immuno-Oncology Research Group is hosting the 5th Annual Immuno-Oncology Symposium on Thursday May 30 at Somerville House, Great Hall, Western University. All are welcome. [Registration](#) is required.

London Regional Cancer Program renamed

The London Regional Cancer Program was officially renamed the Verspeeten Family Cancer Centre on April 29. Funding provided by the family generous donation will be used to establish the Verspeeten Chair in Translational Cancer Research (\$5M), continued support of the Archie and Irene Verspeeten Clinical Genome Centre (\$3M), the creation of cancer fellowships in Medical and Radiation Oncology (\$2M), and to improve patient care (\$10M).

Oncology Research & Education Day

20th Annual Oncology Research & Education Day is being held on Thursday June 13 at the Best Western Lamplighter Inn & Conference Centre. Anyone is welcome to attend. [Registration](#) is required.

Trainee News

Harjot Athwal MSc(c) awarded Anatomy & Cell Biology Travel Award. Athwal is co-supervised by **Armen Parsyan MD** and **Alison Allan PhD**.

Jin-Young Bang MSc(c) awarded Best Oral Presentation Award (Session 6) at Imaging Network on Ontario (ImNO). Bang is co-supervised by **Stewart Gaede PhD** and **Ting-Yim Lee PhD**.

Tricia Chinnery PhD and Jaryd Christie PhD both starting medical physics residency at University of California at San Diego, and Henry Ford Health. Chinnery and Christie were supervised by **Sarah Mattonen PhD**.

Jaryd Christie PhD(c) awarded Lindau Nobel Laureate travel award to attend LINO24. Christie was supervised by **Sarah Mattonen PhD**. Christie will be travelling to Germany in June to attend the event.

Nitara Fernando MSc(c) awarded Best Presentation Award (Session 19) at the Imaging Network of Ontario Symposium. Fernando is supervised by **Paula Foster PhD**.

Erin Lou undergraduate student, awarded the NSERC USRA Award for 2024 summer research. Lou is supervised by **Pingzhao Hu PhD**.

Angela Schincaglia MSc(c) awarded the MSc. Top Ranking Poster Award at this year's 2024 Canadian Society of Immunology (CSI) Annual Meeting. Schincaglia is supervised by **Mansour Haeryfar PhD**.

Sophia Trozzo MSc(c) awarded Best Talk (Session 17) at the Imaging Network of Ontario Symposium. Trozzo is supervised by **Paula Foster PhD**.

Kaitlyn Wade MSc(c) awarded the prestigious NSERC CGS-M Scholarship. Wade is supervised by **Pingzhao Hu PhD**.

Timothy Yau PhD(c) awarded Best Pitch Presentation Award (Session 3) at Imaging Network of Ontario (ImNO) conference. Yau is supervised by **Stewart Gaede PhD**.

Nicole Wang MSc(c) awarded Canadian Society for Immunology (CSI) Travel Award to attend the 2024 CSI Annual Meeting in Alberta. Wang is supervised by **Mansour Haeryfar PhD**.

Welcome

Luciana Brown joins Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry Department of Oncology as Manager, Administration & Finance. Luciana brings more than 20 years of experience in higher education, health care, and research administration.

June Cheng-Baron PhD and Rod Stodilka PhD MCCPM will be joining the Verspeeten Family Cancer Centre's medical biophysics team as medical physicists in the Fall. Stodilka is currently a resident at LHSC and Cheng-Baron joins us from University of Alberta.

Farley Chicilo PhD will be joining the Medical Biophysics team on September 1 as a physics resident. Chicilo joins us from the University of Saskatchewan.

Nikko Chopra MD and Benjamin Merrick MD will be joining the Radiation Oncology Residency Program on July 1 as PGY1's. Both are from the University of Alberta.

Alexa Dang MD will be joining the Radiation Oncology Program on July 1. Dang will be starting a fellowship on a Stereotactic Ablative Radiotherapy (SABR), Imaging, and Comparative Effectiveness Research with **David Palma MD**.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

AMOSO Funding Recipients

Phillip Blanchette MD - "A Real-World Evidence (RWE) study of Adjuvant Bisphosphonate Therapy for Early-Stage Breast Cancer in Ontario, Canada."

Richard Kim MD - "Pharmacogenomics-based Precision Medicine for Preventing Severe Toxicity to 5-Fluorouracil based Chemotherapy: Beyond Simple Genotype Testing."

John Lenehan MD - "Chemotherapy And Stool Transplant in PDAC (CHase PDAC)."

Rahul Nayak MD - "Patient Reported Outcomes Targeting Early Chest Tube Removal (PROTECTR) Study."

Anthony C. Nichols MD - "Defining the transcriptomic, cellular, and genetic architecture of idiopathic subglottic stenosis."

Armen Parsyan MD - "Spatial Omics for Novel Prognostic and Neoadjuvant Chemotherapy Response Biomarkers Discovery in Triple-Negative Breast Cancer."

Stephen Welch MD - "Utility of Methylation Testing as a Predictive Biomarker in Ovarian Cancer Patients."

Canadian Cancer Society Challenge Grant

Anargyros Xenocostas MD - \$522,474 over 3 years for "A Feasibility Study for drug sensitivity screening of AML patients."

CIHR Fall 2023 Recipients

Jeremy Burton MD PhD - in collaboration - \$149,115 for "Identifying causes of neovaginal malodour in transfeminine people."

Richard Kim MD - in collaboration - \$596,700 over 4 years for "Access to primary care services, preventative care, chronic disease management and patient outcomes in alternative primary care remuneration models."

John Lenehan MD and **Saman Maleki PhD** - in collaboration with Queens U. - \$1,786,273 over 4 years for "Fecal microbiota transplantation in combination with immune checkpoint blockade in patients with advanced melanoma: A randomized phase II trial."

Kun Ping Lu PhD, Xiao Zhen Zhou PhD, and David Litchfield PhD - \$100,000 for "Development of Optimized Reversible Pin1 Inhibitors to Block Multiple Cancer-Driving Pathways and to Disrupt Immunosuppressive Tumor Microenvironment."

Kun Ping Lu PhD and **Xiao Zhen Zhou PhD** - \$100,000 for "Identification of Novel Disease Drivers, Therapeutic Targets, and Biomarkers of Sepsis."

Saman Maleki PhD - in collaboration with McGill U. - \$100,000 for "Altering the gut microbiome in Triple-Negative breast cancer: a pilot study."

Parisa Shooshtari PhD - in collaboration - \$719,100 for "Detection of microRNAs in the conditioned culture medium as a non-invasive "miR-print" of human preimplantation embryo competence."

John R. Evans Leaders Fund/Ontario Research Fund (JELF/ORF)

Lisa Porter PhD - in collaboration - \$150,000 - "Virus and Cell Fraction Isolation and Characterization".

LHSC's Academic Realignment Initiative Award

Donna Murrell PhD - "Implementing 3D printing for individualized care in gynecological brachytherapy."

Krembil Foundation

Gregory Dekaban PhD - in collaboration with McGill University - \$2.4M for "Determining Why Immune Regulation Fails to Control Neuroinflammation in Alzheimer's Disease."

Medical Oncology Research Awards (Fall 2023)

Phillip Blanchette MD - for "A Real-World Evidence (RWE) study of Adjuvant Bisphosphonate Therapy for Early-Stage Breast Cancer in Ontario, Canada."

John Lenehan MD - for "Chemotherapy and Stool Transplant in PDAC (CHASe PDAC)."

Stephen Welch MD - for "Utility for Methylation Testing as a Predictive Biomarker in Ovarian Cancer Patients."

NSERC Discovery Grants (Fall 2023)

Lina Dagnino PhD \$40,000 for "Regulation of mechanotransduction by scaffold proteins."

Vanessa Dumeaux PhD \$40,000 for 5 years for "Computational and genomic approaches for the characterization of host-adapted microbial communities."

Aaron Fenster PhD \$41,000 for 5 years for "Development of a 3D ultrasound-guided focal liver ablation system."

Murray Junop PhD \$48,000 for 5 years for "Molecular Mechanisms of DNA Repair in Deinococcus radiodurans."

Daniel Lizotte PhD \$35,000 for 5 years for "Reinforcement learning for decision support with complex action spaces."

Leonard Luyt PhD \$62,000 for 5 years for "Construction of diverse peptide structures through cyclization, metal complexation, radiolabelling and self-assembly".

Christopher Pin PhD \$48,000 over 5 years for "Defining the molecular pathways required for acinar cell function".

John Ronald PhD \$48,000 over 5 years for "A Toolbox for Multimodal in Vivo Molecular Imaging of Genome Editing".

Prostate Cancer Fight Foundation and Ride for Dad

Lisa Porter PhD and **Fred Dick PhD** - in collaboration - \$30,000 for "Preclinical Testing of Novel Reagents to Prevent the Progression to Treatment Resistant Neuroendocrine Prostate Cancer."

Schulich Faculty Support for Research in Education (2023)

Michael Sanatani MD - for "Understanding the obstacles and opportunities around physicians interacting advantageously for shared decision-making."

RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

Al, Kait F. et al. Multi-site microbiota alteration is a hallmark of kidney stone formation. [Microbiome](#). November 2023.

Bhat, Vasudeva et al. Lung-derived soluble factors support stemness/plasticity and metastatic behaviour of breast cancer cells via the FGF2-DACH1 axis. [Clin Exp Metastasis](#). March 2024.

Choueiri, Toni et al. Overall Survival with Adjuvant Pembrolizumab in Renal-Cell Carcinoma. [New England Journal of Medicine](#). April 2024.

Huang, Zi Huai et al. Conditional generative adversarial network driven radiomic prediction of mutation status based on magnetic resonance imaging of breast cancer. [Journal of Translational Medicine](#). March 2024.

Kashash, Dalia et al. Presentation and Outcome of Patients with Multiple Myeloma (MM), Single Centre Experience from Windsor Essex Regional Cancer Centre. [Journal of Blood Medicine](#). January 2024.

Policelli, Robert et al. A Visual Aid Tool for Detection of Pancreatic Tumour-Vessel Contact on Staging CT: A Retrospective Cohort Study. [Canadian Association of Radiologists Journal](#). December 2023.

Punchhi, Gopika et al. Real-world survival outcomes of immunotherapy for advanced non-small cell lung cancer: A single-center retrospective review. [Thoracic Cancer](#). January 2024.

Sams, Mia P. et al. N-Acetylcysteine Alters Disease Progression and Increases Janus Kinase Mutation Frequency in a Mouse Model of Precursor B-Cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia. [Journal of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics](#). March 2024.

Verma, Saurav et al. An Updated Review of Management of Resectable Stage III in NSCLC in the Era of Neoadjuvant Immunotherapy. [Cancers](#). 2024

Yousefi, Yeganeh et al. Microbiome bacterial influencers of host immunity and response to immunotherapy. [Cell Reports Medicine](#). March 2024.

Zeng, PYF et al. The genomic and evolutionary landscapes of anaplastic thyroid carcinoma. [Cell Rep](#). March 2024.



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