

FROM THE SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR

Dear members of the SMRC community,



I am delighted to share exciting developments at St. Mary's Research Centre as we continue to progress in advancing research, fostering collaboration, and strengthening our engagement with the community.

The launch of our Community Engagement Office (COME) marks a major milestone this year, led by Lisandra Lannes. This initiative is central to our mission of making our research more inclusive, impactful, and responsive to real-world needs. By actively engaging with healthcare professionals, local organizations, residents, and policymakers, we ensure that our research is relevant, inclusive, and benefits the community. Our commitments to outreach and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) are at the core of this initiative, marking an important step toward a more collaborative and impactful relationship with the populations we serve.

This spring, COME is hosting several Community Conferences, including:

- **March 13** – The 3rd installment of our Caregiving conferences: Farah Messekher “A look at the reality of caregivers in the West Island: A survey of 700 caregivers”
- **March 28** – A poster exhibit and presentation on Osteoporosis and Osteoarthritis by our SMRC Orthopaedics team at Bibliothèque Benny.
- **April 29** – the *Dr. Hirsh Rosenfeld Distinguished Public Lecture in Family Medicine*, which features SMRC's Dr. Isabelle Leblanc's talk on “Too Much Pain, Doctor!: Recognizing and contextualizing cultural expressions of pain”.

Beyond public engagement, SMRC is proud to reaffirm its commitments to high-quality research by officially joining the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA). DORA is an international initiative advocating for responsible and transparent research assessment. By endorsing DORA, SMRC strengthens its dedication to assessing research based on quality, impact, and real-world contributions.

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FROM THE SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR

This commitment to advancing research excellence is reflected in the groundbreaking work of our researchers. In this spirit, I am thrilled to announce that registration is now open for the *1st Canadian Symposium on Managing Toxicities of Emerging Cancer Therapies* (CAN-TOX). This conference is the first of its kind in Canada, spearheaded by Dr. Khashayar Esfahani, a well-established oncologist at St. Mary's and the 2023 recipient of the Oncology Career Development Award. For more information about this conference and how to register, please consult page 26.



Finally, I am delighted to welcome Dr. Ivan Litvinov to SMRC. As an Associate Professor and FRQ-S clinician-scientist at McGill University's Department of Medicine, Dr. Litvinov brings invaluable expertise in melanoma research. His contributions will play a key role in advancing SMRC's Cancer Care research domain. I look forward to seeing the impact of his work within our research community. To learn more about his research and background, see page 3.

I look forward to seeing how these initiatives help SMRC grow as a centre of excellence in research and community collaboration.

Ari N. Meguerditchian, MD
Scientific Director

Highlight: Dr. Ivan Litvinov joins SMRC



Dr. Ivan Litvinov joins St. Mary's Research Centre

We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Ivan Litvinov, Associate Professor at McGill University, to St. Mary's Research Centre (SMRC) as a Clinician Full Scientist starting March 1, 2025. A leading expert in dermatology and cutaneous oncology, Dr. Litvinov's research will further strengthen SMRC's Cancer Care and Primary Care & Health Systems domain, bringing cutting-edge advancements in skin cancer research and treatment.



Background

Dr. Litvinov is an Associate Professor in the Division of Dermatology of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences of McGill University. He holds a Ph.D. in cellular and molecular medicine at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore, Maryland, and earned his medical degree from McGill, where he also completed his dermatology residency training at the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC). Prior to joining the faculty at McGill, Dr. Litvinov was an Assistant Professor of dermatology at the University of Ottawa between 2015-2017.

Beyond academia, Dr. Litvinov has held influential leadership roles, including:

- Regional Director (Quebec), Canadian Dermatology Association (2019-2021)
- President, Skin Research Group of Canada (2021-2023)
- Treasurer, International Society for Cutaneous Lymphomas (current role)
- Treasurer, Canadian Dermatology Foundation (current role)

His research focuses on cutaneous lymphomas, keratinocyte carcinomas, and melanoma, and his research is supported by various grants from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). Prior to coming to St. Mary's, Dr. Litvinov directed a translational research laboratory within the cancer research program of the MUHC-Research Institute and a complex medical dermatology clinic at the Glen Site. He also led a skin cancer diagnosis and treatment clinic for solid organ transplant recipients. For his pioneering contributions to dermatology and oncology, Dr. Litvinov has received numerous accolades, including:

- Early Career Award in Cancer (CIHR, 2020)
- President's Cup Award (Canadian Dermatology Association, 2019)

Highlight: Dr. Ivan Litvinov joins SMRC



Research Expertise

Dr. Litvinov's area of expertise is skin cancer research, often with a specific focus in cutaneous melanoma, which is responsible for 80% of skin cancer deaths in Canada. His team is currently working on the molecular pathogenesis of skin cancer as well as patient public involvement (PPI) research to raise awareness about the dangers of excessive sun exposure.

Research Focus

Dr. Litvinov's work focuses on the genetic mechanisms driving skin cancers, including cutaneous T-cell lymphoma and non-melanoma skin cancers, with an emphasis on translating molecular discoveries into clinical applications for diagnosis, prognosis, and therapy development.

His expertise aligns closely with SMRC's goal to conduct research that will lead to a greater understanding within the healthcare industry of how best to treat and prevent various types of cancers affecting our communities. Through his work, he not only advances scientific understanding but also educates the public on critical preventative measures against skin cancer—a key priority for SMRC. We eagerly anticipate the valuable contributions Dr. Litvinov will bring to our research community.

Dr. Litvinov recently presented his research on the determinants and impacts of UV radiation on skin health in a collaborative lecture between SMRC and McGill's Department of Medicine, titled "Melanoma and Skin Cancers: Rising Trends and Implications". A full recap of this Scientific Series lecture is available in SMRC's [December Newsletter](#).

Highlight: Caregiving research at SMRC



Caregiving research at St. Mary's Research Centre

St. Mary's has a strong foundation in caregiving research, focusing on supporting the wellbeing of both patients and caregivers. Caregiving is a cornerstone of compassionate and effective healthcare, particularly for older adults and vulnerable patients, which makes up a significant portion of the Côte-des-Neiges and West Island populations.

Central to SMRC's mission is a commitment to support our communities, which includes providing innovative care interventions and tools to help caregivers effectively care for their loved ones whilst meeting their own needs as well. From family members to close friends, caregivers often face unique challenges that require tailored resources and support systems.

SMRC currently has several ongoing research projects supporting caregivers. Caregiving is inherently interdisciplinary in practice, spanning across multiple research domains, including Cancer Care and Older Adult Care. By centering caregiver priorities across its research domain, SMRC aims to address the growing demand for specialized care in aging populations as well as advocate for policies that support wider implementation of care frameworks.

Ongoing caregiving research at SMRC:



Dr. Harmehr Sekhon is exploring how virtual reality (VR) interventions can support individuals with Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers. Through the Virtual Reality and Nature (VRN) program, she is assessing how immersive, remote experiences can enhance mood, reduce loneliness, and foster social connection for both patients and care partners.



Dr. Mark Yaffe has conducted extensive research on family caregiving in eldercare, focusing on the health impacts of caregiving and developing tools to identify and support at-risk caregivers, particularly in the context of aging populations.

Highlight: Caregiving research at SMRC



Dr. Sylvie Lambert has been instrumental in advancing self-management interventions that support both patients and caregivers. Her research includes projects such as TEMPO, a web-based program providing tailored self-management strategies for cancer patients and their caregivers. She is also engaged in policy initiatives to improve caregiver support in Quebec (Observatoire québécois de la proche aidance, Journée nationale de concertation en proche aidance). In a recent study, her team explored the acceptability of family-reported outcomes (FROs) in cancer care, highlighting the importance of integrating caregiver needs into routine screening. The study found that caregivers saw FRO screening as an opportunity to access resources, increase self-reflection, and receive better support for their emotional well-being.[1]



PhD students **Sydney Wasserman** and **Lydia Ould Brahim** are contributing to caregiver-focused research at SMRC. Their work explores digital health solutions, self-management strategies, and mental health interventions to enhance the well-being of caregivers supporting individuals with chronic illnesses, particularly cancer.

Bringing caregiving research to the community:

SMRC is committed to ensuring that findings reach and benefit caregivers directly while also learning from their experiences. Through public events, partnerships, and knowledge-sharing initiatives, SMRC engages with the Côte-des-Neiges community, collaborating with communities to disseminate evidence-based resources and ensure that caregiver perspectives inform future research.

[1] Lambert, S., Loban, K., Gignac, A. S., Magalhaes, M., Brahim, L. O., Chehayeb, S., & Wasserman, S. (2024). From patient-reported outcomes (PROs) to family-reported outcomes (FROs): Acceptability and perceived usefulness of routine screening in cancer care. *Palliative & supportive care*, 1-9. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S147895152400035X>

Highlight: Caregiving research at SMRC



Community Conferences on Caregiving: October 31, 2024 and March 13, 2025

Speaker Alexandra Sabin (Founder, Siaana Tech) discussed technological co-construction methods to support caregivers, as well as patients. Her lecture emphasized the importance of tailored respite services for caregivers, and she introduced Chantal Tardiff, who shared her own experiences as a caregiver for her husband. This event highlighted why caregivers require specialized, accessible support services, and showcased real-world examples of implementation.



Speaker Farah Messekher, Caregiving Coordinator for the CIUSSS-ODIM, discussed the findings of a survey of 700 caregivers in the Montreal West Island. She provided an overview of the most prominent repercussions caregivers may face as a result of providing care, including their health, finances, personal and professional life. Farah also shared how to better support caregivers, which included providing more information on the services available to them, for their own wellbeing as well as the wellbeing of patients.



Scientific Series on TEMPO: November 21, 2024

Dr. Sylvie Lambert presented the TEMPO program, outlining its development, impact on patients and caregivers, and its latest expansion into a large-scale sequential multiple assignment randomized trial (SMART). This stepped-care approach assesses the program's effectiveness compared to traditional care, contributing to evidence-based support for caregivers.



SMRC News



Dr. Harmehr Sekhon presents her research in new video

In a new video, SMRC's Dr. Harmehr Sekhon discusses her research on novel technology-based interventions to support healthy aging, including artificial intelligence and virtual reality tools. She provides demonstrations of how these tools actively improve the lives and care of older adults.

[Watch the video here.](#)

SMRC's research video on Dr. Talía Malagón's research is also [available here](#).



Dr. Sylvie Lambert conducts CIUSS survey for care users and loved ones

Working in tandem with the CIUSSS-ODIM's Quality, Assessment, Performance and Ethics Directorate (QAPED), Dr. Sylvie Lambert is playing a key role in the implementation of the Government of Quebec's [Plan pour mettre en œuvre les changements nécessaires en santé](#) (Plan to implement necessary health changes).

Dr. Lambert is conducting a survey that measures the satisfaction of health care users and their loved ones. Users and their loved ones are invited to share specific aspects of their experience receiving care. The information gathered will go towards improving the quality of patient health and social services.



Dr. Jeannie Haggerty conducts workshop for the McGill PRBN

SMRC researcher Dr. Jeannie Haggerty recently led an engaging workshop at the McGill Primary Care Practice-Based Research Network (PBRN) Workshop Day, guiding clinicians and researchers in transforming real-world clinical questions into meaningful research projects.



SMRC News



The PBRN model is a promising structure for advancing primary care research, connecting clinicians, researchers, and patient partners to co-develop studies that address pressing healthcare challenges. By embedding research directly within primary care settings, PBRNs create a bridge between practice and evidence-based improvements that benefit both providers and patients.

This interactive session underscored the value of structured collaborative research, highlighting how Dr. Haggerty's expertise continues to shape the future of primary care.

Dr. Lyndia Dernis shares expertise on PFAS chemicals on CBC's *The National*

SMRC's Dr. Lyndia Dernis represented the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) and its Quebec committee (AQME) as Canada's government makes strides towards classifying PFAS as toxic. PFAS chemicals are commonly known as "forever chemicals" due to their difficulties breaking down, and yet these chemicals are prevalent in many consumer products in Canada today.



Dr. Dernis spoke about the effects of PFAS chemicals on the human body, and how they can be passed down through generations. Watch the clip from CBC News' *The National* [here](#).

Academic Output



Peer-reviewed scientific publications

Khandideh K. A. Williams, Shamara Baidooobonso, Aisha Lofters, **Jeannie Haggerty, Isabelle Leblanc**, Alayne M. Adams. “Anti-Black racism in Canadian health care: a qualitative study of diverse perceptions of racism and racial discrimination among Black adults in Montreal, Quebec.” *BMC Public Health*, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-024-20636-0>

Sylvie Lambert, Erica E. M. Moodie, **Jane McCusker**, Marion Lokhorst, Cheryl Harris, Tori Langmuir, **Eric Belzile**, Andrea Maria Laizner, **Lydia Ould Brahim**, **Sydney Wasserman**, **Sarah Chehayeb**, Michael Vickers, Lindsay Duncan, Mary Jane Esplen, Christine Maheu, Doris Howell, **Manon de Raad**. “Translating Evidence-Based Self-Management Interventions Using a Stepped-Care Approach for Patients With Cancer and Their Caregivers: A Pilot Sequential Multiple Assignment Randomized Trial Design.” *Psycho-Oncology*, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pon.70043>

Sydney Wasserman, Lydia Ould Brahim, Andrea Maria Laizner, Anita Mehta, José Côté, Melissa Henry, Kimberly Thibodeau, Vasiliki Bessy Bitzas, **Sylvie Lambert**. “Evaluating the acceptability of a self-directed, self-management intervention for patients and caregivers facing advanced cancer.” *Palliative and Supportive Care*, 2025. doi:10.1017/S1478951524001755

Community-focused publications

Dr. Julia Chabot was recently featured in a *La Presse* article, where she shares the unique approach that geriatricians take in developing specialised care solutions for older adults. This feature underscores St. Mary’s commitment to providing personalized, effective care tailored to each patient’s unique needs.

Marie-Eve Cousineau. “Société vieillissante, défis grandissants”. *La Presse*, 2025. <https://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/sante/2025-01-12/geriatrie/societe-vieillissante-defis-grandissants.php>

Dr. Sylvie Lambert breaks down various myths of Patient-Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) in a recent article, featured in community-based patient journal *Expériences* magazine published through the McPeak-Sirois Group. This issue focuses on breast cancer and clinical research.

*Sylvie Lambert. “7 mythes sur les mesures des résultats rapportés par les patient(e)s en oncologie.” Magazine *Expériences*, 2024.* <https://ssaquebec.ca/experiences-7/>

Christina Raneburger, Associate Director of SMRC, was interviewed by Intellia Consulting on the benefits of co-creation and SMRC’s co-creation approach to strategic planning.

Innovation, Agilité & Excellence. “Épisode 202: La cocréation de la stratégie organisationnelle avec Christina Raneburger”. *Intellia Consulting*, 2025. <https://www.intelliaconsulting.com/podcast-innovation-agilite-excellence/>

Roster of Oncology Clinical Trials



Bladder cancer

Accruement Complete

A Phase 3, randomized, study of neoadjuvant chemotherapy alone versus neoadjuvant, chemotherapy plus Nivolumab or Nivolumab and BMS-986205, followed by continued post- surgery therapy with Nivolumab and BMS-986205 in participants with muscle-invasive bladder cancer. [CA017-078]

Breast cancer

Active Recruitment

A Phase 3, Randomized, Multi-center, Open-label Study of DB-1303 Versus Investigator's Choice Chemotherapy in Human Epidermal Growth Factor Receptor 2 (HER2)-low, Hormone Receptor Positive (HR+) Metastatic Breast Cancer Patients whose Disease has Progressed on Endocrine Therapy (DYNASTY-Breast02)

Identification and evaluation of patients at risk of developing cardiotoxicity after receiving chemotherapy for breast cancer, leukemia or lymphoma [CarChem]

Registre cancer du sein métastatoque [Groupe McPeak-Sirois]

Accruement Complete

A Phase III Study of Trastuzumab Deruxtecan (T-DXd) with or without Pertuzumab vs Taxane, Trastuzumab and pertuzumab in HERs-Positive, first-line Metastatic Breast Cancer [Destiny]

A Clinical Trial to Determine the Efficacy of Five Years of Letroxole Compared to Placebo in Patients Completing Five Years of Hormonal Therapy Consisting of an Aromatase Inhibitor (AI) or Tamoxifen Followed by an AI in Prolonging Disease-Free Survival in Postmenopausal Woman with Hormone Receptor Positive Breast Cancer [NSABP-42]

Lung cancer

Active Recruitment

A Phase III, Randomised, Open-Label Study of Savolitinib in Combination With Osimertinib Versus Platinum-Based Doublet Chemotherapy in Participants With EGFR Mutated MET-Overexpressed and/or Amplified, Locally Advanced or Metastatic Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer Who Have Progressed on Treatment With Osimertinib [SAFFRON]

Roster of Oncology Clinical Trials



Lung cancer - continued

An Open-label, Multicenter, Phase 3 Randomized, Active-Comparator-Controlled Clinical Study of Pembrolizumab (MK-3475) in Combination With Sacituzumab Govitecan Versus MK-3475 Monotherapy as First-line Treatment in Participants With PD L1 TPS Greater than or Equal to 50% Metastatic Non-small Cell Lung Cancer [KEYNOTE D46/EVOKE-03]

A Phase 3 Study of Pembrolizumab in Combination With Carboplatin/Taxane (Paclitaxel or Nab-paclitaxel) followed by Pembrolizumab With or Without Maintenance MK-2870 in the First-line Treatment of Metastatic Squamous Non-small Cell Lung Cancer [MK-2870-023]

A Phase 3 Randomized Open-Label Study of Adjuvant Pembrolizumab With or Without MK-2870 in Participants With Resectable Stage II to IIIB (N2) NSCLC not Achieving pCR After Receiving neoadjuvant Pembrolizumab With Platinum-based Doublet Chemotherapy Followed by Surgery [MK-2870-019]

Accrualment Complete

A phase 3 study of Pembrolizumab (MK-3475) in combination with concurrent chemoradiation therapy followed by Pembrolizumab with or without Olaparib vs concurrent chemoradiation therapy followed by Durvalumab in participants with unresectable, locally advanced, stage III non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC). [MK 7339-012]

A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled phase 3 study of Pembrolizumab (MK-3475) in combination with concurrent chemoradiation therapy followed by Pembrolizumab with or without Olaparib (MK-7339), compared to concurrent chemoradiation therapy alone in participants with newly diagnosed treatment-naïve limited-stage small cell lung cancer (LS-SCLC). [MK 7339-013]

A Phase 3 Study of Pembrolizumab in Combination with Carboplatin/Taxane (Paclitaxel or Nab-paclitaxel) Followed by Pembrolizumab with or without Maintenance Olaparib in the First-line Treatment of Metastatic Squamous Non-small Cell Lung Cancer (NSCLC) [MK7339-008]

A Phase III, Randomized, Double-blind Trial of Platinum Doublet Chemotherapy +/- Pembrolizumab (MK-3475) as Neoadjuvant/Adjuvant Therapy for Participants with Resectable Stage II, IIIA, and Resectable IIIB (T3-4N2) Non-small Cell Lung Cancer (NSCLC) (KEYNOTE-671)

Roster of Oncology Clinical Trials



Hematology

Active Recruitment

Statins for Venous Event Reduction in Patients with Venous Thromboembolism (the SAVER Trial)

Early Detection of Lymphoma Relapse Using Plasma ctDNA Sequencing.

A Prospective National MDS Clinical Database (MDS-CAN)

A Phase 3, Multicenter, Randomized, Double-blind, Placebo-controlled Study Comparing the Efficacy and Safety of Golcadomide Plus R-CHOP Chemotherapy vs Placebo Plus R-CHOP Chemotherapy in Participants with Previously Untreated High-risk Large B-cell Lymphoma (CA073-1020 / GOLSEEK-1)

For inquiries:
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Community Engagement Office (COMEO)



Event Recap: Community Conference on Caregiving

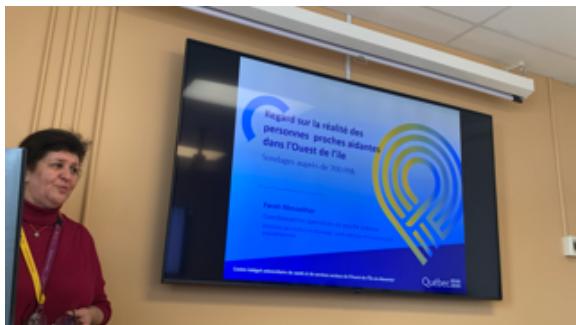
On March 13, 2025, SMRC held the 3rd installment of our caregiving-centered Community Conferences.

We welcomed Farah Messekher, Caregiving Coordinator for the CIUSSS-ODIM, who gave a lecture on the topic: "A look at the reality of caregivers in the West Island: A survey of 700 caregivers". Farah provided a comprehensive statistical overview of Quebec's population that may require care in the coming years and discussed the introduction of Quebec's Law 56, aimed at offering greater support and recognition for caregivers across the province.

Farah also highlighted the diverse ways in which caregivers offer support — from emotional and domestic assistance to logistical help, such as transportation to and from medical appointments. Many caregivers provide multiple forms of support, which can significantly impact their physical and mental well-being, finances, personal and family life, and professional responsibilities. The West Island survey results shed light on some of the most pressing needs of caregivers, including access to information on CHSLDs and informal services, respite periods, and enhanced resources to better support both caregivers and those they care for.

SMRC was honoured to have Farah join us and share insights on the current landscape of care support services in Montreal. Events like this not only help bridge the gap between research and community needs but also strengthen the collaborative ties that drive meaningful change. A heartfelt thank you to Farah Messekher for her dedication and invaluable contributions to supporting informal and full-time caregivers.

For those that missed it, the full recording of this conference is available on [SMRC's YouTube page](#).



Community Engagement Office (COMEO)



Community Engagement Office: Bridging Research and Community

Established this year, the Community Engagement Office (COMEO) fosters meaningful relationships between the researchers and the broader community.

By actively engaging with diverse partners, including healthcare professionals, local organizations, residents, and policymakers, we ensure that research is relevant, inclusive, and benefits the community. We work together to create and share knowledge in primary care, older adult care, cancer care and surgery. Through open dialogue and partnership, we make knowledge accessible, amplify diverse voices, and drive positive change in health and well-being.

COMEO has already made significant progress in public outreach and education, including leading numerous workshops with Community-Based Organisations (CBOs). The Office has also produced two research videos in the past year, to highlight the work of [Dr. Talia Malagon](#) and [Dr. Harmehr Sekhon](#) in a way that is digestible and accessible for the public.

Lisandra Lannes, in charge of the COMEO, is actively working on building strong relationships with CBOs to ensure research is representative, inclusive, and reflects diverse perspectives. Effective ways of achieving this include involving communities in co-designing research projects, establishing advisory boards, and gathering community input through consultations and surveys. SMRC has also recently signed DORA, which marks a major milestone towards creating quality research.

San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment

SMRC officially signed the San Francisco [Declaration on Research Assessment](#) (DORA). As a research centre, we support a set of recommendations for institutions and researchers and are ready to publicly express our commitment to improve research and researcher assessment within our institution.

The general recommendation of DORA is to avoid using journal-based metrics, such as Journal Impact Factors, as a surrogate measure of the quality of individual research articles, to assess an individual scientist's contributions, or in hiring, promotion, or funding decisions. There are also specific guidelines directed at both institutions and individual researchers or research teams to align with the principles of DORA. These include:

Community Engagement Office (COMEKO)



For institutions:

- Be explicit about the criteria used to reach hiring, tenure, and promotion decisions, clearly highlighting, especially for early-stage investigators, that the scientific content of a paper is much more important than publication metrics or the identity of the journal in which it was published.
- For the purposes of research assessment, consider the value and impact of all research outputs (including datasets and software) in addition to research publications, and consider a broad range of impact measures including qualitative indicators of research impact, such as influence on policy and practice.

For researchers:

- When involved in committees making decisions about funding, hiring, tenure, or promotion, make assessments based on scientific content rather than publication metrics.
- Wherever appropriate, cite primary literature in which observations are first reported rather than reviews in order to give credit where credit is due.
- Use a range of article metrics and indicators on personal/supporting statements, as evidence of the impact of individual published articles and other research outputs.
- Challenge research assessment practices that rely inappropriately on Journal Impact Factors and promote and teach best practice that focuses on the value and influence of specific research outputs.

Community Engagement Office (COMEKO)



Community Engagement Office Launch



Centre de recherche de St. Mary
St. Mary's Research Centre

Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux de l'Île-de-Montréal
Québec

FONDATION DE L'HÔPITAL ST. MARY
ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL FOUNDATION

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICE (COMEKO)

OUR MISSION

Established in 2025, the Community Engagement Office fosters meaningful relationships between the researchers and the broader community.

By actively engaging with diverse partners, including healthcare professionals, local organizations, residents, and policymakers, we ensure that research is relevant, inclusive, and benefits the community. We work together to create and share knowledge in primary care, older adult care, cancer care and surgery.

Through open dialogue and partnership, we make knowledge accessible, amplify diverse voices, and drive positive change in health and well-being.

OUR ACTIVITIES

PUBLIC OUTREACH & EDUCATION

- Hosting workshops and events to share health research and increase public awareness.
- Producing videos to highlight key research initiatives.
- Gathering community input through consultations and surveys.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN RESEARCH

- Building research partnerships with local organizations to align health research with community needs.
- Involving communities in co-designing research projects.
- Promoting two-way knowledge exchange between researchers and the public.
- Ensuring research is representative, inclusive and reflects diverse perspectives.
- Establishing advisory boards for ongoing community input.

ADVOCACY & POLICY ENGAGEMENT

- Translating research into actionable recommendations.
- Hosting forums to connect research with policy discussions.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- Engaging staff and communities in research and outreach efforts.

WHO IS IT FOR?

Researchers
Healthcare professionals
Local organizations
General public

CONTACT US: research.stmary@ssss.gouv.qc.ca

On February 27th, Lisandra Lannes officially introduced the Community Engagement Office to our research community.

This presentation covered COMEO's mandate and role, specifying that this is a resource that will help researchers maximize the impact of their research and ultimately improve community health outcomes. Lisandra provided an overview of the events that took place in 2024, as well as what's to come this year.

Key resources to look out for in 2025 include a Community Engagement Strategy, and an EDI Policy & Action Plan.

SMRC will be hosting an event launching the Community Engagement Office for the public later this Spring. Stay tuned for more updates in the near future!



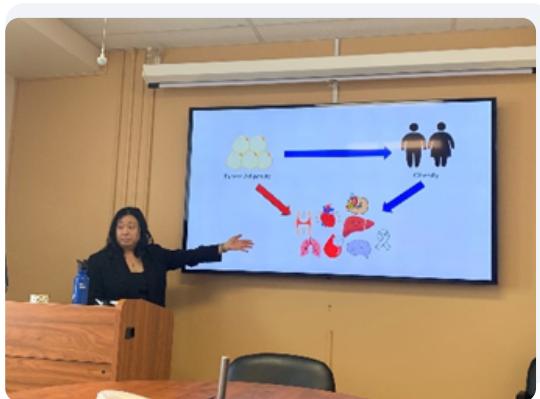
St. Mary's Research Centre Scientific Series



Scientific Series Recap: Thursday, January 23, 2025

Shared Destinies: How Obesity Echoes Aging

Dr. Sylvia Santosa



Obesity and aging share many of the same comorbidities, and often mirror each other with their effects on the body. On January 23rd, Dr. Sylvia Santosa (Concordia University) shared data illustrating how excess weight can accelerate the aging process.

Key takeaways from the presentation included:

- There is a difference in preclinical vs. clinical obesity: the latter will result in alterations to organ function, and is a much more serious threat to health.
- Those with childhood-onset obesity are at 2x the risk for Type 2 diabetes compared to those with adult-onset obesity, and are also physically aged earlier.
- Both the person's age and the age of onset would affect adipocyte deposit differently.

Sylvia Santosa, Ph.D., R.D. is a researcher and expert in the field of nutrition, obesity, and metabolic health. She is currently a full professor in the Department of Health, Kinesiology, and Applied Physiology at Concordia University and holds a Tier II Canada Research Chair in Clinical Nutrition. Dr. Santosa has dedicated her career to studying the intricate relationship between adipose tissue, obesity, and metabolic disorders. She has published numerous peer-reviewed articles in prestigious scientific journals, contributing valuable insights to the field including to how obesity advances ageing. Her work has not only advanced our understanding of how fat tissue function affects the risk of metabolic disease but is also paving the way for more targeted and personalized treatment approaches for obesity-related conditions. Dr. Santosa's work is funded through grants from agencies including NSERC, HSF, CFDR, and CIHR.

*This presentation can be credited for clinical staff (continuing medical education)

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Form: <https://forms.office.com/r/G55ZuLS11Q>

St. Mary's Research Centre Scientific Series



Scientific Series Recap: Thursday, January 30, 2025

Ecologically responsible operating rooms

Dr. Lyndia Dernis



As the climate crisis worsens, each industry can take certain actions towards reducing their carbon footprint. On January 30th, SMRC's Dr. Lyndia Dernis shared strategies for ameliorating sustainability efforts in healthcare facilities, particularly in operating rooms.

Key takeaways from the presentation included:

- The climate crisis will have negative impacts on health care systems, including staffing disruptions, supply chain issues, occupant safety, infrastructure damage, and more.
- St. Mary's Hospital Centre has increased its use of the anaesthetic Sévoflurane, and eliminated its use of Desflurane, which has helped lower our CO2 emissions.
- Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) in effect in the hospital: washable surgical gowns will use water & energy to wash, but even so, would still produce less environmental waste and use less energy than disposable gowns.

Lyndia Dernis has been an anesthesiologist since 2004. Aware of the significant role operating rooms play in producing waste and greenhouse gas emissions within a hospital, she created and leads an action group aimed at actively reducing the ecological footprint of St. Mary's operating room. She also chairs the Sustainable Care Subcommittee for the CIUSSS West Island of Montreal. Part of her work involves raising awareness among healthcare providers about the impact of plastic waste and endocrine disruptors in medical equipment and finding ways to reduce single-use plastics within her institution.

*This presentation can be credited for clinical staff (continuing medical education)

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Form: <https://forms.office.com/r/G55ZuLS11Q>

St. Mary's Research Centre Scientific Series



Scientific Series Recap: Thursday, February 20, 2025

Embracing Black Heterogeneity: An intersectional investigation of anti-Black racism and racial discrimination in health care in Montreal, QC

Khandideh Williams



Involving a diverse array of perspectives and experiences is integral to providing health care solutions that are tailored to all facets of our community. On February 20th, Khandideh Williams presented her research on intra-racial group differences within experiences in the healthcare system.

Key takeaways from this presentation included:

- Racial components of health inequities came more to light during COVID-19 in 2020, and was further corroborated with later research confirming that Black populations had the highest COVID mortality rates.
- There are knowledge gaps in intersectional health research: majority of studies are in the USA, and also focus on Black Americans as a monolith as opposed to factoring in nuances between groups and communities.
- Black patients in Montreal reported different levels of perceived racism in the healthcare system, and intersectional identities play a large part in experiencing various forms of racial discrimination.

Khandideh Williams is a PhD Candidate in the Family Medicine and Primary Care program at McGill University. Prior to commencing her graduate studies, she obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Microbiology and Immunology from the same institution. Committed to addressing inequities in health outcomes and health care experiences, her doctoral research uses both qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate racial inequities and anti-Black racial discrimination in Canadian health care. Her endeavors also include the development of clinical strategy and health care policy recommendations towards improving the quality of health care experiences among Black communities and other racialized groups in Canada.

*This presentation can be credited for clinical staff (continuing medical education)

Contact: christina.raneburger.comtl@ssss.gouv.qc.ca

Form: <https://forms.office.com/r/G55ZuLS11Q>

St. Mary's Research Centre Scientific Series



Scientific Series: Thursday, March 6, 2025

Harnessing Implementation Science to Address Health Inequities and Improve Care for Marginalized Communities

Dr. Guillaume Fontaine



Implementation science is a key component of integrating equitable practices and structures into our healthcare system. On March 6th, Dr. Guillaume Fontaine shared his research on how implementation science will advance health equity.

Key takeaways from this presentation included:

- The links between poor health outcomes and inequitable distribution of resources, power, and wealth.
- Implementation science is needed to deliver effective, high-value care that also factors in clinical ethics as practices continue to evolve.
- There are many challenges to implementation science in the healthcare space, including a lack of diversity in study samples, data shortcomings, and underdeveloped methods.

Dr. Guillaume Fontaine, RN, PhD is a Tenure-Track Assistant Professor of Implementation Science at the Ingram School of Nursing, McGill University, and a Principal Investigator at the Centre for Clinical Epidemiology, Lady Davis Institute for Medical Research. He also serves as a Nurse Scientist for Implementation Science at the Sir Mortimer B. Davis Jewish General Hospital. Dr. Fontaine holds an FRQ-S Junior 1 Research Scholar Award, supported by Quebec's Learning Health System Support Unit (Unité SSA Québec). He is the National Co-Lead of Implementation Science in the CIHR/PHAC Canadian Network on Hepatitis C (CanHepC) and the National Co-Lead of Methods in the CIHR Canadian HIV and STBBIs Clinical Trials Research Network (CTN+). Additionally, he holds visiting appointments at the Kirby Institute, UNSW Sydney, and the Centre for Implementation Research, Ottawa Hospital Research Institute. He is an Academic Editor for PLOS Global Public Health, and a Guest Editor for the International Journal of Drug Policy.

*This presentation can be credited for clinical staff (continuing medical education)

Contact: christina.raneburger.comtl@ssss.gouv.qc.ca

Form: <https://forms.office.com/r/G55ZuLS11Q>

Upcoming Events



Thursday, March 20th

Scientific Series: Dr. Claire Godard-Sebillotte

SM Centre de recherche de St. Mary
St. Mary's Research Centre

MAR 20, 12-1PM
Jane McCusker Conference Room

Dr. Claire Godard-Sebillotte

Equity in dementia care & communication between hospital and primary care



Dr. Claire Godard-Sebillotte is a Geriatrician at MGH and an Early Career Researcher at the RI-MUHC. She has her Masters in Epidemiology and PhD in Family Medicine and Primary Care. Her research program focuses on health service research to improve care trajectories of older adults in situations of vulnerability, especially persons with dementia. Dr. Godard-Sebillotte has a strong expertise in suboptimal care trajectories of vulnerable older adults, including their definition and prevention, with a focus on avoidable hospital use related to gaps in care. She also specializes in health administrative database analysis and the use of cutting-edge causal inference methods for the evaluation of non-randomized interventions. Throughout her career, she has built strong and ongoing collaborations with key stakeholders like the Quebec Ministry of Health, the Institut National de Santé Publique du Québec (INSPQ) and the Alzheimer's Society.

At the end of this lecture, participants will:

- Describe suspected inequities in dementia care in Quebec, a universal healthcare system.
- Describe avenues in dementia care research using participatory and intersectional approaches.
- Describe the current gap in hospital geriatricians' communications to primary care in Quebec.

Participate in SMRC's Scientific Series

2025.03.20 from 12 to 1pm

3777 rue Jean-Brillant H3T 0A2, floor 4, room 4730
Or join via Teams using the QR code.



SMRC Scientific Series presentations are self-approved group learning activities (Section 1) as defined by the Maintenance of Certification Program of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and recognized by the College of Family Physicians of Canada.

Upcoming Events



Thursday, April 3rd

Scientific Series: Dr. Marilyn Ahun



Centre de recherche de St. Mary
St. Mary's Research Centre

APR 3, 12-1PM

Jane McCusker Conference Room

Dr. Marilyn Ahun

Parental mental health and child development - Examining mechanisms and sociocultural differences



Dr. Marilyn N. Ahun is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Medicine (Division of Clinical Epidemiology), and an associate member of the Department of Global and Public Health. She's also a Junior Scientist at the Child Health and Human Development program and Center for Outcomes Research Evaluation at the RI-MUHC. Her doctoral research examined mediators and moderators of the association between maternal depression and children's cognitive outcomes. Her postdoctoral research focused on the implementation of interventions to promote early child development in global contexts. Her current work examines the mechanisms through which parental mental health impacts child mental health and development in global contexts. Her research is supported by funds from CIHR, SSHRC, the Thrasher Research Fund, and the Society for Research in Child Development.

At the end of this lecture, participants will:

Understand the importance of the early childhood period for later life outcomes and disparities in child health and development research

Learn about the differences in mediators and moderators of association between parental depression and children's development across different outcomes and sociocultural contexts

Identify effective strategies for leveraging local partnerships to conduct work in global contexts

Participate in SMRC's Scientific Series

2025.04.03 from 12 to 1pm

3777 rue Jean-Brillant H3T 0A2, floor 4, room 4730
Or join via Teams using the QR code.



SMRC Scientific Series presentations are self-approved group learning activities (Section 1) as defined by the Maintenance of Certification Program of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and recognized by the College of Family Physicians of Canada.



Centre de recherche de St. Mary
St. Mary's Research Centre

Upcoming Events



Friday, March 28th

Community Conference: St. Mary's Orthopaedics



Centre de recherche de St. Mary
St. Mary's Research Centre

COMMUNITY CONFERENCE

ST. MARY'S ORTHOPAEDICS:
OSTEOPOROSIS AND OSTEOARTHRITIS

28
MARCH
10-12PM

Key themes covered by our speakers:

- What do Osteoporosis (OP) and Osteoarthritis (OA) look like? How does it affect you?
- The benefits of exercise on reducing risk for both OP and OA, specifically through low-impact workouts.
- Other ways of reducing risk of OP and OA, including dietary changes, pharmacologic interventions, and various treatments that a healthcare practitioner may provide.



DR. ANTHONY ALBERS

Associate Scientist,
St. Mary's Research Centre



DR. JENNIFER MUTCH

Associate Scientist,
St. Mary's Research Centre



BIBLIOTHÈQUE BENNY

6400 AVE MONKLAND, MONTRÉAL, H4B 1H3

SCAN TO JOIN ONLINE:



Location: Bibliothèque Benny (6400 Monkland Ave)

St. Mary's Orthopaedics will present: "Osteoporosis and Osteoarthritis"

This conference and poster exhibit will bring together the community and SMRC Orthopaedics experts to discuss osteoporosis and osteoarthritis, their impact, and effective prevention strategies such as exercise, nutrition, and medical interventions. By fostering open dialogue and collaboration, this event aims to bridge the gap between health research and community knowledge, empowering individuals with practical insights for better bone and joint health.



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SMRC community conferences connect researchers and the community to foster meaningful dialogue, share knowledge, and collaborate on solutions that improve health outcomes and align with local needs.



Centre de recherche de St. Mary
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Upcoming Events



Tuesday, April 29th:

**Joint Community Conference: Dr. Hirsh Rosenfeld Distinguished
Public Lecture in Family Medicine**



**Dr. Hirsh Rosenfeld Distinguished Public Lecture in
Family Medicine:**

“Too much pain, doctor!”:
recognizing and contextualizing cultural
expressions of pain.

Guest Speaker: Isabelle Leblanc, MD, PhD.
Assistant Professor at the Department of Family Medicine and
family physician at St. Mary's Family Medicine Centre.
The presentation will be followed by a bilingual Q&A session.

Tuesday April 29, 7 - 8pm

Light refreshments will be served from 6 pm.
5858 Côte-des-Neiges (third-floor) and online via Zoom.



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McGill

Department of
Family Medicine



Join us on April 29th for SMRC researcher Dr. Isabelle Leblanc's lecture on the topic of “Too Much Pain, Doctor!”: Recognizing and contextualizing cultural expressions of pain”.

Psychosocial suffering often manifests as bodily pain and can be overlooked in clinical practice when cultural expressions of distress are missed. Understanding how expert family physicians recognize and manage psychosocial distress can enhance the detection, diagnosis, and treatment of mental health challenges. Findings suggest that the key to contextualizing these vague presentations lies in unraveling the patient's narrative and finding shared humanity.

Registration is currently open on the [Department of Family Medicine's website](#).

Upcoming Events



Friday, May 23rd:

1st Canadian Symposium on Managing Toxicities of Emerging Cancer Therapies (CAN-TOX)

**MAY 23
2025
8AM - 5PM**

AGENDA

TIME	SESSION	SPONSOR
8AM	Welcome Address	Dr. Khashayar Esfahani McGill University
8:30AM	Patient Perspective	Oliver Terry McGill University
8:45AM	Gastrointestinal irAEs	Dr. Christopher Ma University of Calgary
BREAK		
9:45AM	Skin irAEs	Dr. Nicole Leboeuf Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Harvard University
10:30AM	Rheumatological irAEs	Dr. Shahin Jamal University of British Columbia
11:15AM	Cardiac irAEs	Dr. Javid Mosleh University of California, San Francisco
LUNCH		
1PM	Pulmonary toxicities of novel anti-cancer drugs	Dr. Carmela Pepe McGill University
1:45PM	Toxicities associated with engineered cell therapies and bispecific antibodies	Dr. Kai Rejeski University of Munich
BREAK		
3PM	Novel tyrosine kinase combinations and their associated toxicities	Dr. Wilson Miller McGill University
3:45PM	The next frontier of toxicity anti-cancer research	Dr. Bertrand Routy Dr. Arielle Elkrief Université de Montréal
Q&A		

REGISTER HERE.
vpsolution.tv/events/can-tox

Join us at CAN-TOX, a premier hybrid event dedicated to advancing the management of toxicities associated with cutting-edge cancer therapies, including checkpoint inhibitors, cell therapies (CAR-T and BiTEs), antibody-drug conjugates (ADCs), and novel tyrosine kinase inhibitors (TKIs).

This dynamic symposium unites leading experts across disciplines to explore:

- The mechanisms driving therapy-related toxicities
- Cutting-edge diagnostic tools
- Evidence-based, multidisciplinary management strategies
- The latest breakthroughs in toxicity research

Don't miss this exceptional opportunity to engage with thought leaders, gain actionable insights, and enhance your expertise in this rapidly evolving field of oncology care.

LOCATION

Hotel Omni Mont-Royal
1050 Sherbrooke St W
or via Zoom (link sent after registration)

For questions, please contact Christina Raneburger:
christina.raneburger.comtl@ssss.gouv.qc.ca

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Please refer to website for updated sponsor list.

SMRC is pleased to share that registration is now open for our upcoming 1st Canadian Symposium on Managing Toxicities of Emerging Cancer Therapies (CAN-TOX).

This conference is chaired by SMRC researcher Dr. Khashayar Esfahani, and will feature presentations by experts from numerous acclaimed institutions, including McGill University, University of British Columbia, Harvard University, University of San Francisco, and more.

Our sessions cover a wide array of topics in toxicity management, including:

- The mechanisms driving therapy-related toxicities
- Cutting-edge diagnostic tools
- Evidence-based, multidisciplinary management strategies
- The latest breakthroughs in toxicity research

To register, please visit our [CAN-TOX Registration Portal](#).

Research and Regulatory Affairs Support Unit Newsletter

All members of the research ecosystem at the Montreal West Island Integrated University Health and Social Services Centre (CIUSSS-ODIM) are invited to contact recherche.comtl@ssss.gouv.qc.ca to be added to the mailing list of the Research and Regulatory Affairs Support Unit (RRASU) newsletter. This newsletter, published every two months, aims to provide you with all relevant information, the latest developments relating to ethics and the procedures to follow for conducting projects within the CIUSSS.

1st Symposium on ethics and responsible conduct in research

The CIUSSS is holding the **1st Symposium on ethics and responsible conduct in research** on May 29, 2025 from 9am-4pm.

Location: in person at the Salle Rougier, Union Française de Montréal (near CHUM and Old Montreal).

[Register here](#). The detailed program and different options (parking, lunch, etc.) will be sent out in the coming weeks.

*Attendance at the first part of this event (in the morning) will be part of a recognized training program on responsible research conduct, and will therefore be required for the renewal of research privileges. Those unable to attend the face-to-face event will be invited to view the recording, which will be made available after the event.



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St. Mary's Research Centre is grateful to St. Mary's Hospital Foundation for its generous financial contribution towards scientific advancement. Le Centre de recherche de St. Mary remercie la Fondation de l'Hôpital St. Mary pour son généreux soutien financier en appui à l'avancement scientifique.