



Advancing Healthcare through Patient- centred Research

ST. MARY'S RESEARCH CENTRE
2024-2028



FONDATION DE
L'HÔPITAL
ST. MARY

ST. MARY'S
HOSPITAL
FOUNDATION



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

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

Québec



McGill

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MESSAGE FROM THE SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR

In October 2023, St. Mary's Research Centre unveiled its new research strategy for the upcoming four years during a half-day event. We want to express our sincere gratitude to everyone who attended in person and took part in this milestone.

The strategy unveiling was the culmination of a nine-month collaborative effort that saw engagement from various key partners and leveraged a multiphase approach: an initial survey, key partner meetings, research domain-oriented retreats, subsequent validation period of the strategic plan based on retreat outcomes, and the final reveal.

St. Mary's Research Centre is immensely grateful to all participants for their valuable contributions and the productive, candid discussions that guided us to this achievement. It is integral to our commitments to collective growth and transparency to recognize that a research plan is an evolving document that continues to develop through structured discussions. We take great pride in presenting our research matrix, mission, and vision statement, which reflect the collective efforts and dedication of our research community.

During the unveiling in October, representatives from our research domains presented their ambitions and strategic priorities for the coming year. Based on these benchmarks, St. Mary's Research Centre now presents a concrete action plan to support this research. Our actions will be organised under five key priorities: Process, Key Partners, Technology, Culture & Talent, and Visibility & Knowledge Transfer.

As we embark on this new chapter, St. Mary's Research Centre will remain steadfastly committed to advancing research excellence through innovation, and is eagerly awaiting what is next. We look forward to working together to achieve our shared goals and making a positive impact on the future of our research centre and the wider community.

Sincerely,
Dr. Ari Meguerditchian

MISSION

St. Mary's Research Centre is dedicated to advancing healthcare through pioneering research and patient-centric practices.

With a focus on patient proximity, innovation, and care accessibility, we are shaping a healthier future that embraces diversity, minority groups, and women's health.

Our commitment to inclusivity drives us to create solutions that cater to the needs of every individual in our vibrant community.



VISION

To be an officially recognized institution within Quebec's clinical and university research network.

By focusing on academic excellence and scientific progress, St. Mary's Research Centre seeks to make significant contributions in its domains of expertise, for the benefit of the St. Mary's Hospital Centre community and beyond.

VALUES

Integrity and Transparency: We prioritize honesty and ethical conduct in all aspects of our work. Transparency is our commitment to openness and clarity in our actions and decisions. We hold ourselves accountable for our responsibilities and strive for reproducibility in our processes.

Collegiality, Collaboration and Inclusivity: We embrace diversity of ideas, champion equity, ensure representation, practice cultural sensitivity, create a welcoming environment and actively work to eliminate bias. Through collegiality, we foster a sense of community where every voice is valued and heard. Collaboration is our driving force as we come together to achieve our shared vision of an inclusive and equitable environment for all.

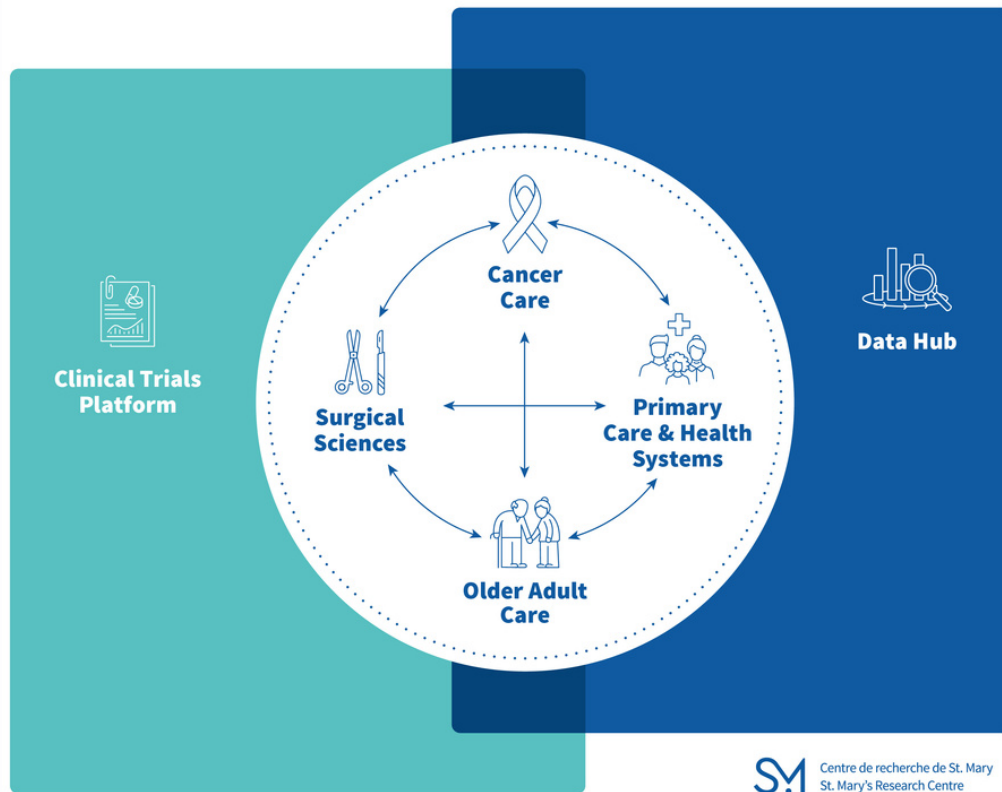
Results-driven: Our actions are guided by a commitment to adaptability, operational efficiency, continuous feedback, and quantifiable progress. We believe in results-driven, solution-oriented approaches, ensuring that we remain agile, productive, and focused on delivering impactful outcomes.



RESEARCH DOMAINS

Scientists and Investigators at St. Mary's Research Centre are organised into four domains of expertise. Our research domains serve as dynamic hubs that bridge the gap between research and clinical realities. Embedded within the clinical context, our domain scientists are well-positioned to respond to the ever-evolving needs of patients and clinicians. This close proximity to the front lines of healthcare fosters true patient-centred research, emphasising the importance of addressing real-world challenges. Moreover, this clinical embeddedness streamlines the knowledge translation process downstream, enabling research evidence to seamlessly integrate into routine clinical practices, thus bringing valuable insights and innovations directly to the bedside.

The additional clinical trials platform and data hub foundations function across all the domains to enhance the centre mission and vision of academic excellence and scientific progress.



Cancer Care

The Cancer Care research domain targets the comprehensive healthcare services, treatments, and support provided to individuals diagnosed with cancer. It encompasses various aspects including prevention, diagnosis, treatment planning and delivery, supportive care, and survivorship programs to improve patients' well-being and outcomes.

St. Mary's Research Centre scientists have identified the following priority research themes:

- **Community Oncology:** Cancer treatment and care provided within local communities or non-specialized healthcare settings.
- **Patient Reported Outcome Measurements and Follow-Up:** Collecting feedback from patients about their symptoms, experiences, and quality of life during and after cancer treatment to inform their ongoing care.
- **Screening and Prevention:** Efforts to detect cancer at an early stage or prevent its occurrence through measures like regular screenings and lifestyle changes.
- **Supported Self-Care for Patients and Caregivers:** Empowering patients and their caregivers with information and resources to manage aspects of cancer care on their own.
- **Cancer Care Outcomes:** Assessing the results and impact of cancer treatments and interventions on patients' health and well-being.
- **Oncology Clinical Trials:** Conducted to investigate new treatments, drugs, therapies, and interventions for cancer patients. These trials are designed to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of these innovations in a controlled and systematic manner before they are widely adopted as standard treatments. Clinical trials in oncology are a crucial part of advancing our understanding of cancer and improving cancer care.

Primary Objectives:

- Generate applicable knowledge to impact cancer patients, survivors and their families.
- Nationally lead in epidemiological discovery.
- Nationally lead in implementation science for patient-centred cancer care and prevention.
- Influence managers, policymakers and other key partners as the experts in specific cancers.

Cancer Care

The Oncology Clinical Trials research theme stands as a paramount priority, playing a pivotal role in advancing cancer research not only within our immediate community but also on a broader national scale. These trials serve as a platform to introduce innovative and cutting-edge treatments to patients, offering a pathway for researchers to expand the current body of knowledge in cancer care. In essence, the support provided through oncology clinical trials contributes to the development of more effective and targeted therapies, ensuring the well-being of our communities.

Primary Objectives: Oncology Clinical Trials

- Establish our centre as a trusted partner: Be recognised by industry sponsors and collaborative groups as a premier cancer centre, known for excellence in conducting and executing Phase 2 and 3 Clinical Trials.
- Prioritise patient impact: Focus relentlessly on enhancing patients' lives through measurable improvements in survival and quality outcomes.
- Drive innovation with investigator-initiated trials: Demonstrate a robust capacity to conceive, design, and execute investigator-initiated trials, contributing to cutting-edge advancements in cancer care.
- Pioneer early-phase trials: Offer a platform for groundbreaking early-phase trials, positioning our centre at the forefront of innovation and contributing to the development of novel therapies.
- Support the entire research spectrum: Possess the capability to seamlessly support basic science and translational research, fostering a comprehensive understanding of cancer and accelerating the translation of discoveries into practical solutions.
- Expand hematology clinical trials: Spearhead efforts to increase hematology clinical trials, actively seeking partnerships and collaborations with sponsors, particularly in the pharmaceutical industry.

Primary Care and Health Systems



The Primary Care & Health Systems domain analyzes healthcare delivery, involving diverse experts like family medicine, emergency medicine and nursing. It assesses primary and acute care accessibility, equity, and effectiveness, evaluates chronic disease management, and improves care coordination to enhance quality outcomes, benefiting patients' overall healthcare experience.

St. Mary's Research Centre scientists have identified the following priority research themes:

- **Family Medicine:** Medical speciality focused on comprehensive healthcare for individuals and families, emphasizing preventive care and ongoing patient-doctor relationships.
- **Practice-Based Research:** Conducting research within primary care settings to improve patient care and outcomes.
- **Emergency Services:** Medical care provided for acute and life-threatening conditions in emergency settings.
- **Implementation Science:** The study of strategies and methods to effectively integrate evidence-based practices into healthcare systems.
- **Chronic Disease Management:** The ongoing care and support provided to individuals with long-term health conditions.
- **Quality Improvement Science:** The systematic approach to enhancing the quality of healthcare services and patient outcomes.
- **Acute Care Services:** Short-term medical care provided for severe illnesses or injuries.

Primary Objectives:

- Generate knowledge in partnership with clinicians, researchers, and healthcare users organisations to improve patient outcomes, healthcare delivery, administration and funding.
- Conduct high quality clinical and health services research relevant to the patients of and services provided by St. Mary's Hospital Centre.
- Promote knowledge synthesis, transfer, and exchange activities supporting evidence-informed decision-making in practice, management and policy.
- Support the application of evidence through quality improvement, action research and implementation science.
- Support a high quality training program for students and medical residents by creating a research-ready environment.

Older Adult Care



The Older Adult Care research domain is a specialized area of healthcare focused on addressing the unique medical, social, and psychological needs of elderly individuals. It includes services related to maintaining physical and cognitive health, managing chronic conditions, addressing social isolation, and ensuring a high quality of life for older adults.

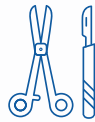
St. Mary's Research Centre scientists have identified the following priority research themes:

- **Cognitive Screening and Rehabilitation:** Assessing and addressing cognitive function in older adults, including rehabilitation for cognitive impairments.
- **Social Isolation and Mental Health:** Addressing the mental health and well-being of older adults, including combating social isolation.
- **Pain Management:** Managing and alleviating pain in older adults, especially related to age-related conditions.
- **Dementia Care Trajectories:** Planning and providing care for individuals with dementia, considering the progression of the condition.
- **Prehabilitation & Rehabilitation:** Preparing individuals for medical procedures through prehabilitation and providing rehabilitation post-procedure.
- **Comorbidity Management - Polypharmacy:** Managing multiple health conditions and the complex medication regimens that often accompany them.
- **Maintain Autonomy & Caregiver Support:** Supporting older adults in maintaining their independence while providing assistance and support for caregivers.

Primary Objectives:

- Implement technological interventions for older adults to improve mental health, cognition, quality of life, decrease length of stay for patients admitted to St. Mary's Hospital Centre and support aging in the community.
- Implement real-world solutions in a multidisciplinary team setting and integrate key partners, including geriatrics clinical healthcare team, older adult and caregiver representatives, community organizations, industry partners, and long-term care facilities.
- Be a national leader in the validation and implementation of non-pharmacologic therapy.

Surgical Sciences



The Surgical Sciences domain encompasses the multidisciplinary field of medicine and research dedicated to advancing surgical techniques, technologies, and practices. It includes innovations in surgical procedures, minimally invasive approaches, surgical education, and improving surgical outcomes through research and best practices.

St. Mary's Research Centre scientists have identified the following priority research themes:

- **Technical Innovations:** Advances in surgical techniques, tools, and equipment to improve surgical procedures.
- **Minimally Invasive Approaches:** Surgical methods that minimise the size of incisions and tissue damage.
- **Education/Simulation - Skills Enhancement:** Training surgeons and healthcare professionals through education and simulation to enhance surgical skills.
- **Prehabilitation & Rehabilitation:** Preparing patients for surgery through preoperative interventions and providing rehabilitation post-surgery.
- **Optimised Care Pathways:** Streamlining and improving the sequence of care for surgical patients.
- **Surgical Outcomes:** Evaluating the results and impact of surgical procedures on patients' health and recovery.
- **Surgical Clinical Trials:** Research studies that investigate various aspects of surgical procedures and interventions. These trials are designed to evaluate the safety, effectiveness, and outcomes of surgical techniques, devices, and approaches.

Primary Objectives:

- Become an integral part of McGill University's surgery department research portfolio.
- Elevate surgery towards an academic profile.
- Advance the science of care that is efficient, safe, and cost-effective, focusing on processes rather than devices, that serves the general population (not a niche market).
- Improve patients' care and impact via technology, applicable research, etc.
- Improve knowledge transfer and research volume.

Platforms Empowering Research



Clinical Trials Platform

St. Mary's Research Centre aims to enhance clinical trial efficiency within all research domains through dedicated organisational support. The Clinical Trials Platform will optimize and streamline research processes by coordinating administrative steps for researchers, such as ensuring all compliance standards and grant requirements are met, thereby allowing researchers to devote more energy to the work itself. This support will establish a more efficient and agile process.



Data Hub

The SMRC Data Hub facilitates seamless data collection, management, and storage. By offering a suite of tools, technical assistance, and comprehensive guidelines, the Data Hub ensures researchers achieve optimal outcomes at all stages of the project life cycle.

Moreover, the Hub is dedicated to fostering a cohesive and standardised approach to researchers' access to both internal and external data sources. Whether accessing institutional databases or leveraging insights from digital health initiatives and data banks, researchers benefit from streamlined access protocols. This unified access framework, developed in conjunction with institutional partners, enables researchers to harness existing databases more effectively, thereby advancing knowledge across our research domains.

Central to its mission, the Data Hub acts as a pivotal platform, consolidating a wide array of data sources to support advanced analytics, modelling, visualisation, and decision-making processes. By facilitating access to expanded data sources, it empowers researchers to conduct high-level analyses and derive meaningful insights critical for driving innovation and discovery.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Our five strategic priorities align with our mission and vision. They emphasize our commitment to inclusivity, collaboration, transparency, and driving impactful outcomes:

1. **Optimize Operations** for Research Excellence: support efficient and sustainable growth.
2. **Forge Collaborative Networks** for Research Advancement: engage our key partners and community .
3. **Implement Technology-Enhanced Data Management** for Research Transparency: provide the best tools to support researchers' needs.
4. **Cultivate Inclusive Knowledge Sharing** for Research Development: nurture a collegial and collaborative culture to retain and attract top talent.
5. **Elevate Visibility and Knowledge Transfer** for Research Impact: enable and facilitate the mechanisms that ensure our research makes a difference.



Priority 1: Optimize Operations for Research Excellence

St. Mary's Research Centre's first priority in pursuing research excellence is the optimisation of operational and administrative efficiency. Our objective: enhance core services inclusive of all four research domains that underpin a researcher's journey from project inception to completion.

Integral to this is the establishment of a Scientific Productivity Office offering pre- and post-award services. Working directly with researchers, it will identify research opportunities, gaps, and funding opportunities; coordinate application submissions; support scientific writing and budget preparation. We will optimise processes relating to responsibly managing our resources and ensuring compliance to various institutional and funding agency requirements. Our goal is to make the process of securing funding as straightforward as possible. Once grants are obtained, our Scientific Productivity Office experts will continue providing administrative support, including project tracking, staffing, and more. Scientific productivity tracking is another cornerstone of this priority, which includes managing data on projects, publications, researcher profiles, etc. We aim to help researchers identify potential areas for growth, development, and collaboration, ensuring the cycle of research is continuous.

This optimisation streamlines the research journey whilst ensuring the sustainability of our core operations in finding resources and financing needed to thrive as a research institution.

Priority 2: Forge Collaborative Networks for Research Advancement

Our second strategic priority is to proactively engage with our key partners to advance research and uplift diverse perspectives in pursuit of innovation. Our objective: build and strengthen these collaborative networks in clinical contexts, industry, government, academia, and the wider community.

Collaboration in clinical contexts ensures that our research remains patient-centred. In industry, we open the doors to valuable expertise and cutting-edge knowledge. Engaging with government entities ties into policy changes, allowing our research to have a meaningful impact. In academia, we create the space for transparent knowledge transfer and investment into our future researchers. We are proud collaborators with the McGill network of healthcare and scientific advancement institutions, as well as with our partners across the Quebec university network.

Our commitments to community engagement include the public, non-governmental organisations, and other non-profits, to disseminate knowledge generated at St. Mary's Research Centre to the wider population. In doing so, we bridge the gap between research and its practical application, fostering an environment of transparency. Thus, this priority stands on foundations of collaboration and action, designed to increase our impacts and opportunities at St. Mary's Research Centre through strong, community-driven networks.

Priority 3: Implement Technology-Enhanced Data Management for Research Transparency

Our third strategic priority leverages innovative technology to usher in a new era of transparent data management, aiming to provide our research community with advanced tools for seamless, secure storage, organisation, and sharing of research data.

This priority initiates a comprehensive IT strategy that supports data management, ensuring secure data storage, accessibility, and organisation. In doing so, we foster transparency and reproducibility, reinforcing the credibility of our research. We will also prioritise conduct a thorough needs assessment for software and tools, with the goal of providing applications that empower researchers in their data analysis, tracking, and more. By placing the right tools at their fingertips, we enable our researchers to focus on their core research objectives. Finally, we will develop comprehensive training modules and support structures to allow our researchers to harness the full potential of these tools and navigate the digital landscape with ease and confidence.

In essence, our third priority embraces a future where technology can empower researchers to manage data efficiently and transparently, driving the impacts of our research to new heights.

Priority 4: Cultivate Inclusive Knowledge Sharing for Research Development

Our fourth priority aims to cultivate an inclusive research environment that celebrates collaboration, knowledge sharing, and open lines of communication, whilst underscoring inclusivity and diversity within our research community.

In alignment with our Scientific Productivity Office (Priority 1), we will continue to promote interdisciplinarity across research domains, as true innovation often arises at the intersection of disciplines. Our core objective is to expand and diversify our research community, starting with recruitment and a focus on bolstering our Older Adult Care and Surgical Sciences portfolios. Ongoing assessments and opportunities will guide further recruitment endeavours.

By nurturing this culture of inclusivity, we simultaneously retain our top talent and attract new researchers who share our passion for engineering meaningful impacts. Our commitments under this priority transcend traditional boundaries, foster innovation, and bolster a diversity of perspectives that drive our community forward.

Priority 5: Elevate Visibility and Knowledge Translation for Research Impact

Our fifth and final strategic priority aims to elevate St. Mary's Research Centre's visibility and knowledge translation, bridging the gap between research outcomes and real-world impact.

Central to this mission is the organisation of regular seminars, workshops, and conferences. By showcasing research projects in this format, we open our researchers to new opportunities to present their work internally and externally. Our annual research day is the cornerstone of this endeavour. Collaborations with the Direction des affaires universitaires, de l'enseignement et de la recherche (DAUER) Knowledge Transfer team and the Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux de l'Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal (CIUSSS-ODIM) internal and external communications teams further enhance our outreach and impact. Additionally, the Scientific Productivity Office supports researchers in adhering to the most beneficial formats to appeal to key partners.

Mentorship and knowledge transfer will further allow St. Mary's Research Centre to help bridge the generational gap, supporting seasoned researchers in providing expertise to junior members. Investing in our future generations ensures that valuable insights are not lost, and we continue nurturing a culture of continuous learning.

To increase St. Mary's Research Centre's online visibility, and by extension our tether to the rest of the research world, we are recruiting a Communications Manager who will reinforce our scientific productivity online. A dynamic website will serve as a central hub for research updates, research community contributions, and engaging with a broader audience. Strengthening our social media presence will keep our audiences informed on the latest developments in research, and we will actively engage in relevant online communities to expand our knowledge-sharing digitally.

Ultimately, our fifth priority is a proactive step in taking our research beyond academic achievements; by focusing on mechanisms to elevate visibility and impact, we bridge the gap between the knowledge itself and its real-world applications. We aim to keep the fruits of our research accessible, relatable, and impactful in all settings.

OUR UNIQUE ADVANTAGE

St. Mary's Research Centre stands as a unique institution in the realm of healthcare research, characterised by a compelling combination of attributes that set us apart. At the heart of our distinctiveness is the proximity of our patients, the bedrock of our research community. Nestled in a vibrant and diverse environment, we have the privilege of access to a richly varied patient population, enabling us to conduct research that is profoundly relevant to the local community's healthcare needs.

Our hallmark lies in our unwavering commitment to a 'patient-centred approach,' a legacy that spans over three decades of pioneering science that caters to patients. This unique expertise is woven into the very fabric of our institution, guiding our work and infusing it with a deep-rooted understanding of the challenges and aspirations of those we serve. The unwavering support of St. Mary's Hospital Foundation in taking St. Mary's Research Centre to its full potential allows us to ensure that this core value remains at the heart of research activities.

St. Mary's Research Centre was, since its inception, fully engaged with healthcare professionals, as it continues to be. Our collaborative approach, championed by leadership and seamlessly integrated into clinical operations, is nothing short of transformational. We are truly embedded within the clinical context, facilitating the co-creation of solutions that stand at the intersection of diverse expertise and address complex healthcare problems comprehensively. This sets us apart from institutions with a more siloed research approach.

Our access to receptive and visionary leadership is yet another distinctive asset. This support not only attracts top talent but also nurtures a culture of innovation that fuels the successful execution of research projects, driving our mission to advance healthcare and improve patient outcomes.

In addition, our dynamic and responsive processes, from research planning to publication and visibility, stand as a testament to our efficiency and agility. We are quick to identify bottlenecks and offer innovative solutions, ensuring that our research not only advances knowledge but also makes a tangible difference in the world.

These distinctive attributes fuel our mission and vision, empowering us to make lasting contributions to the healthcare landscape and shape a healthier and more inclusive future for all.




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St. Mary's Research Centre is grateful to its partners for their continued support.

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