



From the scientific director

Dear members of the SMRC community,

It is my pleasure to share with you the latest edition of our newsletter before the summer break.

The academic year 2022-23 has been incredibly busy for the Research Centre. Undoubtedly, you have noticed the numerous changes that have taken place over the past 12 months. These changes include the overhaul of our financial and human management processes, the relaunch of our scientific programming with a greater outreach to healthcare professionals, offering continuing medical education credits by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, which are applicable to all healthcare professions such as doctors and nurses. Additionally, we have successfully deployed our document management strategy, processing over 1 million pages of scientific documentation. These and many other significant and minor actions have strengthened our partnership with the CIUSSS and McGill University, positioning us for future growth. Change is not easy, and I would like to express my gratitude to all of you for your patience, collaboration, and words of encouragement. I would also like to thank the management team at the SMRC for their dedication and professionalism. Of course, these transformations would not have been possible without two very important individuals, Christina Raneburger, Associate Director, and Jean-Daniel Beauchesne, General Manager. I am truly grateful to both of them for their commitment, their availability well beyond regular office hours, and the excellence of their work. Christina and Jean-Daniel, on behalf of all of us, a big thank you!

In this edition of the newsletter, we are delighted to introduce you to our inaugural Community Oncology Research Chair, Dr. Anita Koushik. This Chair was established through the generosity of St. Mary's Hospital Foundation, with the aim of studying how the organization and delivery of cancer services can prioritize the patient in their natural environment rather than the hospital. Dr. Koushik was selected for this prestigious position after an extensive national and international search. Following her post-doctoral studies at the Harvard School of Public Health, Dr. Koushik joined the Université de Montréal's School of Social and Preventive Medicine, where she currently serves as a full professor and principal scientist. Her research focuses on understanding the influence of lifestyle-related factors on the etiology and survival of women's cancers. Dr. Koushik's recruitment, along with the recent addition of Dr. Malagon as SMRC's Cancer Epidemiologist and the renewal of Dr. Lambert's Canada Research Chair, contributes to enriching the research faculty at the SMRC, further solidifying our leadership position in patient-centered scientific advancement.

I wish you a wonderful summer break and look forward to seeing everyone on September 28th for the annual Scientific Director's presentation.

Ari N. Meguerditchian, MD
Scientific Director

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Highlight:

Chair in Community Oncology: Dr. Anita Koushik

We are thrilled to announce the appointment of Dr. Anita Koushik as holder of the new Chair in Community Oncology, a position of great significance and responsibility within our organization. Dr. Koushik brings an exceptional set of skills, expertise, and a profound dedication to improving the lives of cancer patients. She will officially assume the role on August 1st, 2023.

Background

Dr. Koushik is currently a full professor at the University of Montreal's Department of Social and Preventive Medicine and a researcher at the CHUM Research Center (CRCHUM) in the Health Risks axis. She also holds an academic appointment with the McGill Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology, further highlighting her extensive involvement in the field of oncology. With a BSc in Pharmacology from the University of Alberta, an MSc in Community Health and Epidemiology from Queen's University, and a PhD in Epidemiology and Biostatistics from McGill University, Dr. Koushik has demonstrated her commitment to academic excellence and the pursuit of expertise. She completed her postgraduate training in the Department of Nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health, expanding her knowledge in the field of nutrition and its impact on health.



Research focus

Dr. Koushik's research has focused on understanding the etiology of ovarian and lung cancers, honing in on areas such as physical activity, environment, and nutrition. Her rigorous scientific investigations have paved the way for improved prevention strategies, early detection methods, and enhanced treatment options. As Chairholder, Dr. Koushik will lead our efforts to enhance the quality of cancer care in our community. Her multidisciplinary approach, combined with her expertise in epidemiology and cancer-related risk factors, will enable her to identify and address key issues affecting patients.

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to St. Mary's Foundation for their generous financial support, which has made this tenured position possible. Their commitment to advancing cancer care and their belief in the importance of community-based oncology have paved the way for this exciting appointment.

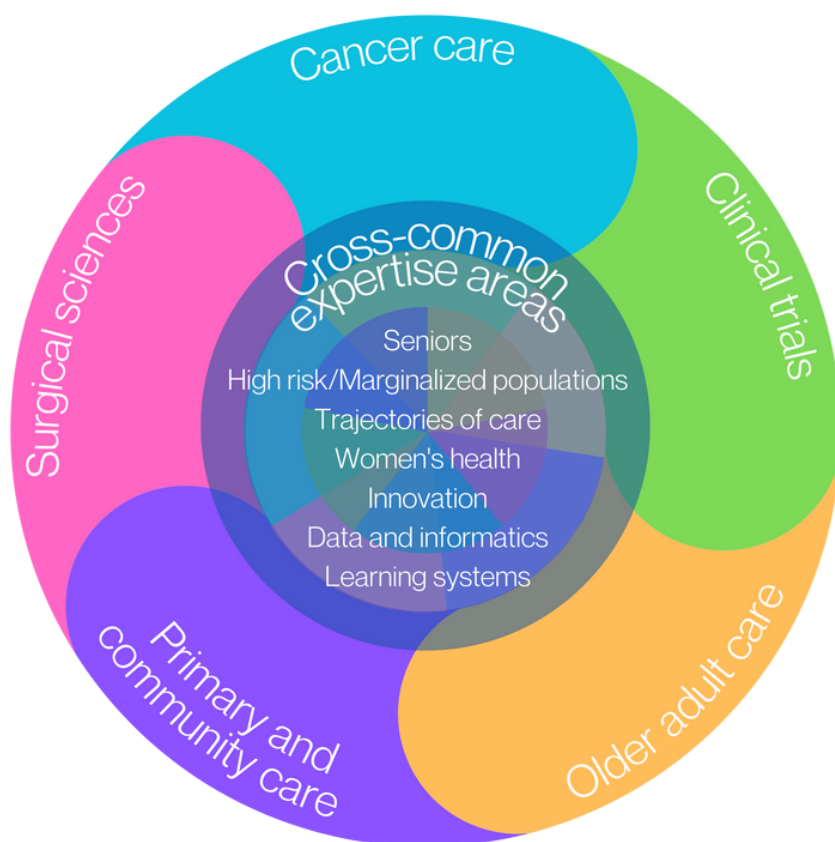
Strategy Update



Update on the research strategy exercise

During the researcher-only mini-retreat held on May 1st, our strategy consultant Eric L'Heureux facilitated the session with 10 researchers representing all of our research fields. The purpose of this workshop was to work towards a cohesive vision for the Research Centre (RC) and define our strategic goals.

The main objective was to identify strategic priorities and determine the corresponding short-term, mid-term, and long-term actions required to achieve them. This exercise aimed to align our efforts and guide our research activities effectively.



Additionally, the mini-retreat involved a review of the RC research matrix, which has been evolving throughout the process. The research matrix serves as a tool to map out and organize our research activities, ensuring they are aligned with our strategic objectives.

During the workshop, researchers were given the task of reflecting on and proposing answers to three key questions:

- **What is our ambition?**
- **Where should we play?**
(Segments; unique value proposition, channels, geography)
- **What are the critical capabilities needed?**

By conducting this retreat and refining our strategic vision, we are better equipped to focus our research efforts and drive meaningful progress within the RC.

Strategy Update



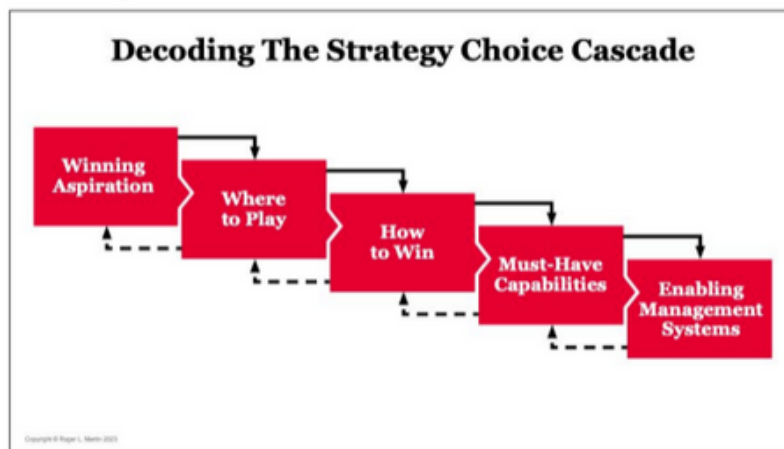
What management systems are required?

The purpose of these questions was to guide the participants in defining the strategic direction of the Research Center (RC) and determining the necessary elements for its success.

By addressing these questions, the researchers aimed to clarify the overall ambition of the RC, identify specific areas or segments where it should focus its efforts, define the unique value proposition and channels that would differentiate the RC's research, specify the critical capabilities required to achieve its goals, and consider the management systems necessary for effective operation and coordination within the RC.

The objective of exploring these questions was to provide a comprehensive understanding of the RC's strategic priorities and establish a roadmap for future actions and resource allocation.

5 key choices



The mini-workshop concluded the first phase of this important exercise strategy, which will lead us to the second phase. The final destination of the second phase will be to synthesize and select key takeaways from the survey, mini-workshops, and the mini-retreat to create a cohesive strategic vision and plan.

We are planning to present our research strategy to the entire SMRC Community on October 1st. Stay tuned for more updates and an official invitation.

Strategy - Be Unique - Make Choices

New Staff



Tracy Jean Brice, the new Executive Assistant of St. Mary's Research Centre. Tracy is responsible for the administrative operations and internal and external relations of the centre. She will also be responsible for assisting management in strategic matters. Tracy graduated from UQAM with a B.A. in Public Management.



João Vitor de Camargo has joined Dr. Sylvie Lambert's team as a Research Assistant. He obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from McGill University in 2019. He possesses experience working as a research assistant and lab manager in diverse psychology and psychiatry labs at institutions such as McGill University, the Douglas Mental Health Institute, and Concordia University.



Anna-Mareva Ferville will be working on the "Too much pain doctor!" project as a qualitative analyst, under the supervision of Dr. Isabelle Leblanc and co-investigators Dr. Jeannie Haggerty and Alayne Adams, as well as master's student Madison Leggatt. She is responsible for participant recruitment and data collection as well as interview transcription and translation. She also participates in data analysis, working closely with the student and the research team. She holds a Master's degree in Nursing with a specialization in consulting from the Université de Montréal.

SMRC News

Maurice Saint-Laurent Prize



Congratulations to Dr. Sophia Mondestin won the Maurice Saint-Laurent Prize. This prize is bestowed to a Quebec Resident who presented the best research project during the Annual Meeting of the AMGQ. The title of her research project was: Music Interventions for the Facilitation of Sleep in the Acute Geriatric Setting: a 3-arm Randomized Controlled Trial. The study was conducted under the supervision of Dr. Julia Chabot.

Recent graduates



Sydney Wasserman recently graduated from the Master's in Advanced Nursing and will now be pursuing her PhD in Nursing at McGill University. She has been very involved as a research assistant at St. Mary's Research Centre and McGill University, where her research primarily focuses on self-management interventions curated for both patients and their caregivers. With Dr. Sylvie Lambert as her PhD supervisor, she will be studying the acceptability of Coping-Together Advanced for patients and caregivers facing advanced cancer with a pilot SMART.

Academic Output

Scientific Publications

Wakelee, H., Liberman, M., Kato, T., Tsuboi, M., Lee, S.-H., Gao, S., Chen, K.-N., Dooms, C., Majem, M., Eigendorff, E., Martinengo, G. L., Bylicki, O., Rodríguez-Abreu, D., Chaft, J. E., Novello, S., Yang, J., Keller, S. M., Samkari, A., & Spicer, J. D. Perioperative Pembrolizumab for Early-Stage Non-Small-Cell Lung Cancer. *New England Journal of Medicine*. 2023.

This global phase III clinical trial / study included 797 participants. These participants were patients diagnosed with lung cancer that was deemed resectable and randomly assigned to receive either immunotherapy with Pembrolizumab vs Placebo before and after surgery. All patients received chemotherapy prior to surgery.

The primary objectives of the study were to assess event-free survival (time without disease progression or death) and overall survival.

Secondary objectives included evaluating the tumor's response to treatment and monitoring safety.

The results of this study, recently presented at the annual (2023) ASCO conference and simultaneously published in the prestigious *New England Journal of Medicine*, revealed that adding pembrolizumab to the treatment significantly improved event-free survival compared to the placebo group. The pembrolizumab group also showed higher rates of major tumor response and complete tumor response.

This study is of great significance as it highlights the benefits of incorporating pembrolizumab (an immunotherapy drug) into the treatment of early-stage lung cancer. The combined approach of pembrolizumab with chemotherapy before and after surgery showed improved event-free survival and increased chances of major tumor response and complete tumor response. Further research is needed to fully understand the long-term impact on overall survival.

Abstract Published

Morena, Nina, Libby Ben-Zvi, Victoria Hayman, Mary Hou, Diana Nguyen, Carrie A. Rentschler, Ari N. Meguerditchian. "How reliable are post-mastectomy breast reconstruction videos on YouTube?" *Journal of Clinical Oncology* 41, 2023 (suppl 16; abstr 11021).

Poster

Morena N, Ben-Zvi L, Hayman V, Hou M, Nguyen N, Rentschler CA, Meguerditchian AN How reliable are post-mastectomy breast reconstruction videos on YouTube? ? [Poster] presented at: Celebration of Research and Training in Oncology, Montreal, QC. June 8, 2023.

Roster of Oncology Clinical Trials



Bladder cancer

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

“A Clinical Trial to Determine the Efficacy of Five Years of Letrozole 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]

A Randomized Phase III Trial of Adjuvant Therapy Comparing Chemotherapy Alone (Six Cycles of Docetaxel Plus Cyclophosphamide or Four Cycles of Doxorubicin Plus Cyclophosphamide Followed by Weekly Paclitaxel) to Chemotherapy Plus Trastuzumab in Woman With Node- Positive or High-Risk Node-Negative HER2-Low Invasive Breast Cancer [NSABP-47]

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 Phase III, Randomized Open-Label Multicenter Study Evaluating the Efficacy and Safety of Adjuvant Giredestrant compared with Physicians Choice of Adjuvant Endocrine Monotherapy in patients with Estrogen Receptor-Positive HER-Negative Early Breast Cancer [TRIO045]

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

Lung cancer

A Phase 3 Study of Pembrolizumab in Combination with Pemetrexed/Platinum (Carboplatin or Cisplatin) Followed by Pembrolizumab and Maintenance Olaparib vs Maintenance Pemetrexed in the First-Line Treatment of Participants with Metastatic Non squamous Non-Small-Cell Lung Cancer [MK7339-006]

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 3 Randomized, Placebo-controlled Study to Evaluate the Safety and Efficacy of Pemetrexed + Platinum Chemotherapy + Pembrolizumab (MK-3475) with or without Lenvatinib (E7080/MK-7902) as First-line Intervention in Participants with Metastatic Non squamous Non-small Cell Lung Cancer [MK7902-006]

Roster of Oncology Clinical Trials



Lung cancer - continued

A Phase 3, Multicenter, randomized, open-label trial to compare the efficacy and safety of pembrolizumab (MK-3475) in combination with Lenvatinib (E7080/MK-7902) versus docetaxel in previously treated participants with metastatic Non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) and progressive disease (PD) after platinum doublet chemotherapy and immunotherapy [MK7902-008]

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 1b/2 Study to evaluate the efficacy and safety of Pembrolizumab in Combination with Investigational Agents for the treatment of Participants With PD-1/L1-refractory Extension-Stage Small Cell Lung Cancer in need of Secondary-Line Therapy [MK3475-B98]

A Phase 2 Study to Evaluate the Efficacy and Safety of Pembrolizumab plus Investigational Agents in Combination with Etoposide and Cisplatin or Carboplatin for the first line Treatment of Participants with Extensive Stage Small Cell Lung Cancer [MK3475-B99]

A Randomized Open Label Phase 3 Study of SAR408701 vs Docetaxel in Previously treated Metastatic Non-Squamous Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer patients with CEACAM5 Positive Tumors [EFC15858]



Information:

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St. Mary's Research Centre Scientific Series



SMRC scientific series Recap: June 1, 2023

Music Interventions for the Facilitation of Sleep in the Acute Geriatric Setting: a 3-arm Randomized Controlled Trial

Dr. Julia Chabot & Sophia Mondestin



On June 1st, 2023, Dr. Julia Chabot & Sophia Mondestin presented Music Interventions for the Facilitation of Sleep in the Acute Geriatric Setting: a 3-arm Randomized Controlled Trial. Dr. Chabot, a St. Mary's geriatrician and dedicated musician herself, examined the impact of musical and non-musical listening interventions on sleep facilitation in patients admitted to the Geriatric Evaluation Assessment Unit (GAU).

A questionnaire was used to measure patients' subjective opinion of their sleep quality, and secondary outcomes such as mood, pain level and number of medications used for sleep were also measured. Although the results of this small trial were inconclusive, Dr. Chabot's work will inform future studies.

Her commitment to improving patient care and quality of life were apparent through the presentation: this work began almost 10 years ago as a successful quality improvement initiative bringing together community musicians who volunteer to play for patients on the GAU and evolved into a sophisticated three-armed randomized controlled trial and peer-reviewed publications.

Attendants of the presentation were inspired by the ways in which clinical and research excellence continue to be demonstrated at St. Mary's.

Upcoming Scientific Series

September 7, 2023 : Walter Marcantoni (UETMISSS)

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

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



EVENTS

Save the Date

Scientific Director's **Annual Presentation**

Strengthening our Base,
Ensuring our Future

Dr. Ari Meguerditchian

28 SEPT, 2023 @ 12H



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