



Dear members of the SMRC Community,

We usually showcase the SMRC's contributions to academic advancement at St. Mary's through this monthly newsletter, but the last edition of 2021 focuses on our most important asset: our people. The past 20 months have been very taxing for the SMRC community. Despite the challenges, our teams have adapted rapidly, developing innovative ways to continue scientific advancement, despite a multitude of restrictions.

Researchers at St. Mary's have been successful at putting their expertise at the service of vulnerable patients in areas such as remote support and patient empowerment, they have opened clinical trials, offering innovative treatment options for cancer patients, they have established research collaborations with other centers. To them and everyone involved in advancing science at St. Mary's, my sincere thanks!

To better support this team of exceptional individuals, the SMRC recently launched a partnership with liftsession.com, a platform that promotes health and wellness. As the pandemic enters its 21st month with a surge of cases, it's important to make sure everyone has access to the right support.

You'll find out in this newsletter about liftsession's innovative approach to wellness. Of course, this investment would not have been possible without our partner and ally, the St-Mary's Hospital Foundation.

My best wishes to everyone for the holidays, stay safe and enjoy the time with your family and loved ones!

Ari Meguerditchian
Scientific Director, SMRC

Our employee health – At the heart of a new partnership with LIFT.

LIFT
session

Since March 2020, the Covid-19 epidemic has imposed many changes at the SRMC. From a total shut-down to partial return to work, the impacts were felt professionally and personally. It was important for the SMRC to ensure the health of its employees through various initiatives:

- **Employee Assistance Program:** Available to all of its employees, in partnership with the CIUSSS-ODIM. The employee assistance program has been made available to all employees of the SMRC since October 11th with the generous support of the CIUSSS-Odim. It offers services from different professionals from mental health to legal support. It is available 24/7 at 1-877-257-5557. We encourage everyone to consult this free service.

- **Infection Prevention and Control Team:** Local PCI plan specific to the SMRC developed and implemented to prevent any contamination and ensure PPEs are always available. Since June, we are seated at the Groupe d'action local (GAL) table which allows the SMRC to be informed of all major activities or issues going on at St.Mary's hospital, therefore enabling management to rapidly respond to the evolving situation
- **Wellness Talks:** Four virtual Wellness talks from experts, covering topics such as ergonomics and posture when in telework, healthy sleeping habits, adverse reactions to hand hygiene products, stress management and how managing the impact of COVID-19 on children and adolescents. We also held 2 workshops, one early on in the pandemic as well as a refresher session in December 2021, on best practices including use of PPE to prevent the spread of Covid-19. We wish to thank the infection control department from CIUSSS-Odium, specifically Sabah Loudini who has been providing support to SMRC.
- **LIFT Session:** A pilot-project for a virtual platform targeting physical and mental wellness was put in place in the Spring of 2021. Based on the positive feedback, the SMRC is now proud to offer to all its members the full suite of Lift Session services, including: personalized training programs, nutritional coaching and a weekly private mindfulness session.

"I value the mindfulness sessions offered by LIFT. Taking a moment to stop, breathe and focus on wellness is very worth it. It helps me refocus, reenergize and continue on positively with the rest of my day. I would recommend it to everyone"

"Breathing exercises bring a moment of peace to my day and promote a healthy, accessible and easy habit of relaxation. I also appreciate [Bram's](#) introduction on a special topic."

- **TEAMS channel:** We wish to highlight an initiative from Recruitment Coordinator, Cindy Ibberson creating a TEAMS channel allowing staff to join virtually, and share time, knowledge and other resources while working on individual projects
- **Special events:** The Social Committee organized an outdoor Wellness Day in October 2021. and a Winter Holiday Virtual Party on December 13th to celebrate the end of the year.



Wellness Day 2021 at the Mont-Royal

The way forward – The Heritage project

Efforts to document the past 30 years of research at St-Mary's continue. Interviews with key figures of scientific advancement on campus are underway in collaboration with the St-Mary's Hospital Foundation. If you have suggestions of names of individuals who have had a significant contribution to research at St-Mary's, please contact [Gina Costanzo](#).

Grants

Isabelle Crépeau, SMRC Scientific Information Officer, now offers valuable administrative grant support to all our research teams who require it. Services include:

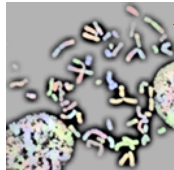
- Letters of intent and grant online submission assistance
- Detail contribution updates and formatting
- EndNote bibliography

- Other special support requests

Requests must be sent to SMRC General Manager, [Gina Costanzo](#).

Grant	LOI deadline	Application deadline	Funding Agency
SPOR Primary Care Network	N/A	2021-12-07	CIHR (Research Net)
Project Grant: Project Grant : Fall 2021 and Spring 2022	2022-02-09	2022-03-09	CIHR (Research Net)
Research in Clinical Assessment	N/A	2022-02-01	Medical Council of Canada
RCN Call for Applications 2021 Research Fund	N/A	2022-01-17	Rosy Cancer Network

Oncology - Research.



Active studies

The following clinical trials at the SMRC-SMH are currently open for patient recruitment:

Lung cancer

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). [MK-3475-671]

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 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). [MK 7339-013]

A phase 2 precision oncology study of biomarker-directed, Pembrolizumab- (MK-3475, SCH 900457) based combination therapy for advanced non-Small cell lung cancer (KEYNOTE-495; KeyImPaCT). [MK-3475-495]

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]

Recently published



Boureaux M, Ould Brahim L, Apedaile D, Wasserman S, Magalhaes M, Belzile E, Frati FYE, Lambert SD. [Evaluation of online, publicly available cancer-related educational and self-management resources for symptom management](#). *Psychooncology*. 2021;30(11):1884-93.



Bining M, Wasserman S, Ould Brahim L, Belzile E, Magalhaes M, Lambert SD. [An evaluation of publicly available smartphone apps to support unpaid cancer caregivers](#). *J Pain Symptom Manage*. 2021 DOI: 10.1016/j.jpainsymman.2021.09.017



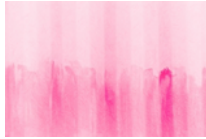
Ould Brahim L, Lambert S, Feeley N, Coumoundouros C, Schaffler J, McCusker J, Moodie E, Kayser JW, Kolne K, Belzile E, Genest C. [The effects of self-management interventions on depressive symptoms in adults with chronic physical disease\(s\) experiencing depressive symptomatology: A systematic review and meta-analysis](#). *BMC Psychiatry* 2021;21(1):584.

Academic output in December at SMRC

Academic output in December at SMRC

Manuscripts under review	4
Manuscripts in preparation	2

Pinkwashing



Nina Morena, PhD candidate under Dr. Meguerditchian wrote an article on the McGill University Department of Integrated Studies in Education, Define the Line web page, on pinkwashing and the misinformation it can carry.

The original breast cancer ribbon was not pink but peach coloured. When Charlotte Haley, the original creator, refused to work with Self Magazine and Estée Lauder, they changed its colour from peach to '150 pink' – the pastel shade we have now come to associate with breast cancer awareness. This process has become known as pinkwashing: where companies release pink versions of their products with the aim of donating a portion of their proceeds to charities. While it may seem harmless, pinkwashing can lead to misconceptions about the disease and our needed responses to it. As misinformation continues to be a threat to the public health, we should question how this pink aesthetic influences the way we think about and respond to breast cancer. Nina Morena, [The trouble with pinkwashing](#), Define the Line, McGill University, October 22, 2021.

Lung health in Nunavik



SMRC invited Dr. Faiz Ahmed Khan to present his work on lung health amongst the Inuit of Nunavik.

It was a unique opportunity for the clinician and research communities at St Mary's Hospital to gain insight into the historical and on-going injustices faced by Nunavik Inuit, in order to better understand how respiratory health services and health research can be improved in these remote communities.

Dr Kahn discussed the importance of cultural safety and of relationship building when providing health care services or conducting research with Inuit communities. He reminded those attending the presentation of our shared roles and responsibilities in helping to redress health inequalities for all citizens of our province.

Dr. Khan is a respirologist, Associate Professor at the Department of Medicine - McGill University, Director of TB Clinical Services at Montreal Chest Institute - McGill University Health Centre and Associate Director at McGill International TB Centre. He applies epidemiologic methods to identify ways to improve the diagnosis and management of respiratory diseases. He splits his time between Montreal and Nunavik, where he has several active research collaborations underway with the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services and Nunavik communities.

Staff news: Winter holiday celebration



A virtual winter holiday celebration was organized on December 13. Animation and a home delivered meal accompanied this get together. Special appreciation to Sandhya Baskaran, Research Coordinator, who organized a winter clothes donations. The clothes were distributed to the shelters downtown Montreal via volunteers from the People's Church of Montreal.

New faces at SMRC



Amélie Ibrahim - Research Assistant

Amélie Ibrahim joined SMRC in November 2021 as Research Assistant. With Dr [Antonia Anaert's](#) team, Amélie is working on chronic obstructive pulmonary disease & telehealth project. Amélie was born in Trois-Rivières and lived in Lebanon. She did one undergraduate medical year in Santiago de Compostela, Spain with an Erasmus Scholarship award and graduated in 2019 in Medicine with Honors from Beirut Arab University - Lebanon. Amélie is currently enrolled in a Graduate Diploma in clinical Research at McGill University, Department of Experimental Medicine. She is particularly interested in Medical Research and clinical trials.

DECEMBER H A P P E N I N G S

Lunch & Learn ~ December 16, 2021

12pm-1pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/409844888>

Prévention et contrôle des infections

Sabah Loudini, CIUSSS-ODIM

Lift sessions ~ Every Wednesday

12:15pm

<https://www.liftsession.com/>

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Bacteria: National Cancer Institute

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