

St. Mary's Research Centre

MARCH 2023



FROM THE SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR

Dear members of the SMRC community,

This month's edition provides updates on the year's priorities that I had announced in September 2022. Despite post-pandemic limitations, the Research Centre has been able to advance on many important projects.

You'll find updates on the strategic planning exercise, the development of a structured educational program, scientific data and documentation management and the process of communicating our productivity more efficiently. Change is often not easy, and I'm grateful for everyone's participation in these critical steps that will reinforce the SMRC for further growth.

You will also get to learn about the research initiatives led by Dr Khashayar Esfahani, the inaugural recipient of the SMHC Career Development award. Finally, the newsletter provides an update on SMRC's Research Data Management Strategy, a tri-agency requirement for which we have teamed up with the Digital Research services Team at McGill University.

I'm very pleased to inform you that in the last days of the month, we were able to confirm the recruitment of Talia Malagon to the Research Centre. Dr Malagon will significantly enrich the research faculty with her expertise in epidemiology and mathematical modeling. Many of you had an opportunity to meet her following her lecture-presentation earlier this year. Next month's newsletter will introduce you to her research program, which includes a focus on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on cancer-related services to patients.

I'd like to conclude by thanking Isabelle Crépeau, Scientific Development Officer at SMRC. After almost a decade at St. Mary's, Isabelle has decided to take on new challenges at Université de Montréal. Many of you have complemented the new, enriched newsletter format and content over the past year; much of that was made possible through Isabelle's efforts as its Editor. On behalf of everyone at SMRC, thank you Isabelle.

Ari Meguerditchian, MD
Scientific Director

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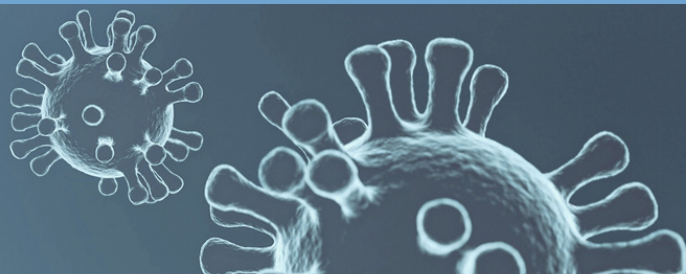
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HIGHLIGHT: DR KHASHAYAR ESFAHANI



Dr. Esfahani is a well-established oncologist at St. Mary's Hospital Centre (SMHC). His expertise is in the treatment of skin, head and neck, and renal cancers with a research focus on immune-related adverse events. In December 2022 he received the [Oncology Career Development Award](#).

Research focus

Dr. Esfahani's research focus is on the study of immune checkpoint inhibitors (ICI). These drugs are among the most promising approaches to fighting cancer. However, the enhancement of immunity with ICI can cause immune-related adverse events (irAE), serious, and undesirable off-target immune and inflammatory reactions.

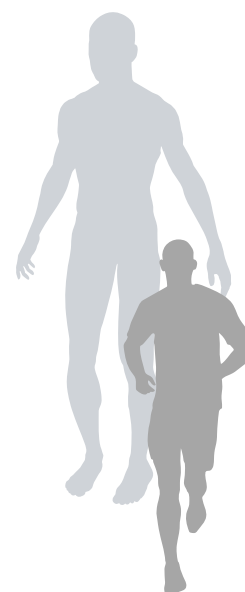
Vision

His vision is to identify mechanisms driving irAE with the hope of designing mitigation strategies that would allow for a safer and more targeted delivery of ICI.

MIRAE Research Project

In 2018 Dr. Esfahani co-founded one of Canada's largest collaborative efforts to study immune-related adverse events (irAEs). The iMmunotherapy and Immune-Related Adverse Events (MIRAE) project gathers a vibrant group of clinicians and basic scientist with a common vision of exploring determinants of autoimmunity. The MIRAE project has many facets, including:

- A **biobank**, where the patient's biological samples are stored before the start of ICI, during treatment, and at the moment of irAEs. Samples are then analyzed through cutting-edge technologies such as single-cell RNA sequencing or proteomics to assess biomarkers of disease.
- A dedicated province-wide immunotherapy **tumor board**, at which complex cases of irAEs are presented to a panel of experts in autoimmunity. This will allow for a better personalized treatment for each patient.
- A Canadian-wide community of practice through the application **ONCOAssist** to discuss cases and exchange ideas between specialists on the subject of irAEs.



The objective for this project is to include St Mary's under the umbrella of MIRAE and allow the patients to benefit from the elements provided by the research group.

HIGHLIGHT: DR KHASHAYAR ESFAHANI

To date, the MIRAE initiative has led to some remarkable breakthroughs in the field of irAEs, with publications in the highest venues such as the New England Journal of Medicine.

Based on these preliminary results, larger studies have been designed and are currently ongoing.

Selected publications

Esfahani K, Elkrief A, Calabrese C, Lapointe R, Hudson M, Routy B, Miller WH Jr, Calabrese L. [Moving towards personalized treatments of immune-related adverse events](#). Nat Rev Clin Oncol. 2020 Aug;17(8):504-515.

Esfahani K, Buhlaiga N, Thébault P, Lapointe R, Johnson NA, Miller WH Jr. [Alemtuzumab for Immune-Related Myocarditis Due to PD-1 Therapy](#). N Engl J Med. 2019 Jun 13;380(24):2375-2376

Esfahani K, Meti N, Miller WH Jr, Hudson M. [Adverse events associated with immune checkpoint inhibitor treatment for cancer](#). CMAJ. 2019 Jan 14;191(2):E40-E46.

“ I hope to continue to be a leader in this very novel and exciting field of irAEs where many discoveries are yet to come.”

Dr. Khashayar Esfahani

Dr. Esfahani completed his oncology training at McGill in 2015 following which he decided to pursue further research in the field of immuno-oncology through the Royal College Clinical Investigator Program fellowship with a master's in experimental medicine.

- Full member at St Mary's Hospital and Associate Member at the Jewish General Hospital
- Associate Member, McGill Centre for Translational Research in Cancer
- Assistant Professor in Oncology, McGill University Gerald Bronfman Department of Oncology



SMRC STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2023

Dear Research Community,

In September 2022, ten priorities for the 2022-23 academic year were presented. Last month's newsletter provided a report on the progress of the first six priorities.

With this edition, we would like to update you briefly on the final four priorities. We take this opportunity to thank the management team and everyone at the SMRC who contributed on the advancements reported here.

Dr. Ari Meguerditchian, Scientific Director
Christina Raneburger, Associate Director



7) Communicate scientific productivity effectively (50% completed)

Since September 2022, SMRC has optimized its monthly newsletter by increasing its content to better reflect the diversity of research at St. Mary's. Collaborations have been reinforced with St. Mary's Hospital Foundation and the CIUSSS communications teams for the development, translation and sharing of content.

An external consultant specializing in communications for academic institutions has been recruited and is currently conducting a needs assessment. This will be followed by a benchmarking process and a proposal of a comprehensive communications strategy for SMRC.

In addition, SMRC has also initiated a collaboration with the Knowledge Transfer Unit of the DAUER to develop a KT plan specific to the research community at St. Mary's.



8) Manage Documentation, Information and Data effectively (75% completed)

In August 2022, SMRC hired Marc-André Bélisle to the position of Document Management Officer with a mandate to lead SMRC towards responsible management of its documentation and archiving. During the past 7 months, Marc-André has processed over 300,000 pages of documents, 121 boxes of archives, and vacated 18 rooms storing paper documents.

He has ensured that SMRC upholds its obligations with regards to clinical trial document conservation, has updated the index of documents stored off campus and ensured the safe disposal of documents no longer needed. He has developed a paper document conservation work tool for the SMRC and is now in the process of developing a classification system for the SMRC's R drive.

Additionally, Christina Raneburger, collaborated with the McGill University Digital Research Services team within the Office of Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation) to develop the McGill Institutional Research Data Management (RDM) strategy that will also be applicable to McGill affiliated Research Centres and Institutes, such as SMRC. The RDM strategy has obtained approval and was submitted to the Tri-Agency early March.

SMRC STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2023 (CONTINUED)



9) Develop a Robust Scientific Educational Program (75% completed)

Under the leadership of Christina Raneburger, SMRC has significantly improved its offer of programmed scientific activities. On January 11, 2023, the Research centre received designation by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons to provide continuing professional development credits to health care professionals that attend to its scientific presentations. Lectures are now held in hybrid mode, through videoconferencing and on-site.

Furthermore, remote access to presentations is made widely available across all CIUSSS facilities, thereby increasing attendance and improving the SMRC's ability to generate impact. Programming has been expanded to reflect topics related to populations typically under-represented in research. For instance, in April, SMRC will host a lecture from Dr Dorothy Williams titled "Exploring Black care-giving in Quebec predating the 21st century".

Finally, following the very positive response to the lecture on conflict resolution in February, SMRC will continue to include in its annual programming presentations on the enhancement of research professionals' skills. The next steps include forming a committee that will support SMRC in coordinating the lecture series. Topics and speakers are currently being selected for September 2023 – June 2024.



10) Hold a Strategic Planning Retreat (50% completed)

The SMRC is moving forward with the aim to developing a vision, mission and comprehensive scientific plan to define the next decade of activities (c.f. recommendation in the Bergman Report). In October, Intellia Consulting, an external partner with expertise in academic institutions, was mandated to conduct a strategic planning exercise on behalf of the SMRC.

The multistep process started with a survey of researchers and staff at the Research Centre, members of the SMRC community, McGill's Faculty of Medicine, St. Mary's Hospital Foundation and CIUSSS leadership. The response rate to this survey conducted in November – December 2022 was impressive. In a second step, 13 thematic workgroups met for a deeper dive in high-value areas identified through the survey.

Meetings conducted in February and March included the following workgroups: Cancer Care Continuum, Oncology Trials, Surgical Science (orthopaedic surgery group), Surgical Science (gynecology), Primary Care and Community Medicine (SMHC), Primary Care and Community Medicine (McGill University department), Healthy Ageing.

The workgroups were attended by stakeholders from the CIUSSS leadership, DAUER CIUSSS, SMHF, Pharmacy CIUSSS, Former director SMH and the founder of SMRC, research coordinators and staff. The next step of the strategic planning process is to synthesize the findings of the survey and workgroups.

SMRC NEWS

MCGILL INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH DATA MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND THE SMRC

The Digital Research Services (DRS) team at McGill University has notified the Tri-Agency (Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), about the completion of the McGill Institutional Research Data Management (RDM) Strategy on February 24, 2023.

The Tri-Agency has acknowledged receipt of this strategy. Therefore, given SMRC's affiliation with McGill University, the RDM Strategy therefore applies to St. Mary's Research Centre. For more information please visit :

[McGill Institutional RDM Strategy | Digital Research Services Hub - McGill University](#)

SMRC JOINS THREE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION

[Association canadienne-française pour l'avancement des sciences \(ACFAS\)](#)

Non-profit organization contributing to the advancement of science in Quebec, in the Canadian Francophonie and on the international Francophone scene.

[Canadian Administration of Research Administrator \(CARA\)](#)

National voice for research administrators in Canada and a nationwide community.

[Society of Research Administrators International \(SRA International\)](#)

Premier global research management society providing education, professional development and the latest comprehensive information about research management to professionals.



Congratulations to Administrative Agent, Amaryllis Kaneza for correctly identifying the 40 movies starring black leads during St. Mary's Hospital Foundation wraps-up of Black History Month with quiz contests.



Welcome to Théra Kankonde. Théra is site coordinator (St Mary Hospital Centre) for the e-IMPAQC project. Under the supervision of Dr. Sylvie Lambert, she is responsible for recruiting and collecting patient data. Théra previously worked as a regional coordinator for LoveMatters Congo. She is presently enrolled in public health studies at the Université de Montréal. [LinkedIn](#)

ACADEMIC OUTPUT

Grants

Development and validation of an implementation blueprint for the implementation of patient-reported outcome and experience measures (PROMs/PREMs) in oncology.

Fontaine G, **Lambert SD**, Pomey MP, Poitras ME, Sasseville M, Ouellet J, Marcovici L, **Ould Brahim L**, **Wasserman S**.

Réseau de recherche en interventions en sciences infirmières du Québec (RRSIQ) – Projets innovants et structurants

\$50,000.00 CAD

1 year

Funding Opportunity

Canadian Institutes of Health Research

[Research Excellence, Diversity, and Independence \(REDI\) Early Career Transition Award](#)

This award is a unique opportunity to support the transition of post-doctoral researchers, clinicians, and research associates who self-identify as a racialized woman or as a Black person into independent research faculty positions. The REDI award consists of two phases spread across a maximum of 6 years: an initial mentorship phase and a final independent research phase.

The CIHR application deadline for this competition is May 3, 2023.

Scientific Publications

Maheu C, Singh M, Courbasson C, Sarvanantham S, **Lambert SD**, Dubois S, et al. A proof-of-concept study of iCope: A nurse-led psychoeducational telephone intervention for women attending a rapid diagnostic centre for breast abnormality. *Can Oncol Nurs J*. 2023;33(1):101-7.

Moisan P, Barimani B, Al Kindi M, **Mutch J**, **Albers A**. Semiconstrained posterior-stabilized total knee arthroplasty: Indications, risks and benefits in primary and revision surgery. *Can J Surg*. 2023;66(2):E103-E8.

Morena N, Zelt N, **Nguyen D**, Dionne E, Rentschler CA, Greyson D, **Meguerditchian AN**. Use of online patient reviews to assess medical oncologist competency: Mixed-method sequential explanatory study. *JMIR Formative Research*. DOI: 10.2196/39857 (forthcoming/in press).

Smith A, Wu VS, **Lambert SD**, Lamarche J, Lebel S, Leske S, et al. A systematic mixed studies review of fear of cancer recurrence in families and caregivers of adults diagnosed with cancer. *Journal of Cancer Survivorship*. 2022;16(6):1184-219.

Turchetta A, Moodie EEM, Stephens DA, **Lambert SD**. Bayesian sample size calculations for comparing two strategies in SMART studies. *Biometrics*. 2022.

Wang AW, Kim Y, Ting A, Lam WWT, **Lambert SD**. Healthcare professionals' perspectives on the unmet needs of cancer patients and family caregivers: Global psycho-oncology investigation. *Support Care Cancer*. 2022;31(1):36.

Media

Wasserman S, Ledieu E. [This isn't how to solve Quebec's nursing shortage](#). *The Gazette*. February 9, 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 3 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 3 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 3, 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 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]

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 3 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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International Women's Day

*On this March 8, 2023,
St. Mary's Research Centre is proud to recognize
and highlight the scientific contributions and
achievements of our researchers in medical
research.*

Dr Anne Anderman

Dr Marie-Jesula Arietta

Dr Antonia Arnaert

Dr Julia Chabot

Dr Carolyn Elbaz

Dr Laura Anne Habib

Dr Laura Haiek

Dr Jennifer Mutch

Dr Jane McCusker

D. Isabelle Leblanc

Dr Maryse Larouche

Dr Adriana Martinez

Dr Tanya Skamene

Jeannie Haggerty PhD

Jennifer Marandola MS

Sylvie Lambert PhD

Susan Law PhD



EVENTS

THURSDAYS
SMRC SCIENTIFIC SERIES
12PM-1PM

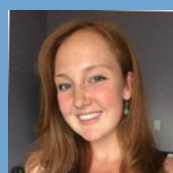
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/409644888>



Jobs to be Done: A New Perspective on Need Assessment*

**Jeannie Haggerty PhD &
Victoria Wicks MSc (c)**

March 16, 2023



Needs assessments are used to identify how product or services can better meet the gap between a current state and a desired outcome for a target group. The Jobs to Be Done Theory focuses on why that gap matters.

What started out as a project to understand patients' top needs in navigating the health system turned into a broader exploration of the functional, emotional and social dimensions of that need to better identify relevant solutions.



Supported self-management (SSM) for depression: A 15-year project *

Dan Bilsker PhD

March 30th, 2023

Dr. Dan Bilsker is a Director of Vancouver Psych Safety, a consulting firm, Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of BC and an Adjunct Professor at Simon Fraser University. The conference will focus on The Antidepressant Skills Workbook, a tool developed to improve supported self-management of depression.

The Antidepressant Skills Workbook was developed to enhance supported self-management of depression. It is available for free download in 7 languages and is evidence-based, user-friendly and feasible for wide dissemination. It has been downloaded over 2 million times globally.

The surprising potential of supported self-management for depression will be discussed.

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