Our combined efforts to leverage our growing research faculty and resident pool has proven a great strategy with an equally good return on our investments. As we enter 2015 and now halfway through the academic year, we enjoy greater connectivity and continue to celebrate our Department successes. We will continue to foster a culture of building bridges and fueling new research ideas towards a grand vision of driving innovation and change in the health care system.

Mohit Bhandari, MD, PhD, FRCSC
Associate Chair, Research

McMaster University, Department of Surgery
Dr. Marko Simunovic is a Surgical Oncologist at the Juravinski Cancer Centre and an Associate Professor in the Department of Surgery at McMaster University. He is also affiliated with the McMaster Departments of Oncology, and, Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics. His clinical area is colorectal cancer while his research focuses on knowledge translation and surgeon-directed quality initiatives. He has performed volume-outcome, wait time, and uptake of innovation studies ostensibly for cancer surgery in Ontario. A negative province-wide knowledge translation trial called the ‘Quality Initiative in Rectal Cancer Trial’ informed the design of his ongoing region-level surgeon-directed project in the south-east part of Ontario called the ‘Quality Improvement in Colorectal Cancer in LHIN4’. Dr. Simunovic suggests that in the publicly funded Ontario health care system, region-level solutions are required to address the variable patient outcomes following cancer surgeries observed at the hospital and individual surgeon level.

Tell us a bit about your research.

MS: Since 2006, I have been the lead investigator on the Quality Improvement in Colorectal Cancer in LHIN4 project, which is an effort to optimize surgical care for every LHIN4 patient with colorectal cancer through support interventions for surgeons.

What defines research success to you?

MS: I think that the key thing is that you have to decide what will really matter 5-10 years down the road when you look back. What do you want to be known for? If in 5-10 yrs I can look back on my career and I can honestly say that I provided good quality clinical care, that I helped advance the quality of that clinical care, and I was able to move the yardsticks on the road to improved quality improvement— my real interest is in creating new methods, approaches, vehicles to more rapid and effective closure of quality gaps— then I will consider my research career to have been a success.
Enlighten us on your most exciting interventions.

MS: The first is our collaborative cancer clinics which are similar to multidisciplinary clinics except they are same specialty to same specialty, so surgeons speaking to surgeons. We think that by having specialists talk to specialists, there is more efficient transfer of information, and a much more improved platform of support for a person performing that particular skill set. Multidisciplinary clinics are important and have their role, but we think primarily surgeons require surgeon-surgeon support and collaboration. We’ve had two promising publications and we are about to submit a third in this area. The second intervention I find promising is the Surgical Event Reporting System (SERS), and that’s akin to an analysis that occurs after a close call or crash in the airline industry. So if there’s a negative event in surgery, we suggest that you can take these negative events and look back at all relevant information (imaging, clinical notes, operative notes) and identify potential deficiencies in care to try to overcome these deficiencies next time. This is a concept that is common to continuous quality improvement.

What insights did you gain from your travels and work in Haiti?

MS: My experience in Haiti sharpened my focus on my area of research. The system of cancer surgery in Ontario has evolved over time and it produces results that are a result of that evolution and design. So if negative things happen, some of it is beyond our control but much of it is not – so that’s what interests me. How can we influence the system so that those things that can be improved are improved.

What are your 3 ingredients to achieving a work/life balance?

MS: I have tried to be deliberate in achieving a balance in my life. I have 3 children, Calum who is 15, Saskia who is 14, and Luka, who is 13, and I’m very proud of my kids and really enjoy spending time with them. I’m the trainer on the hockey team, and I take my daughter to half the riding lessons. I’m also a big supporter of my wife, Colina Maxwell, who is the director of a not-for-profit artist run centre called Centre 3 and they are a triad of art education community. I didn’t foresee that so many of the quality issues I’m interested in are so perfectly suited for colorectal cancer surgery so the balance between my clinical and research, worked out very nicely, and its been a nice combination of clinical focus that reinforces a research focus. With that said, my 3 ingredients would be a strong focus, opportunity for combination, and faith that what you are doing is worthwhile.

Check out the James Street North Art Crawl every second Friday of the month all year for an open art experience at all James Street North galleries with a taste of a festival-like atmosphere!
The second Building Bridges event was held on November 28th with continued success from the first in its series. The showcase presented a true reflection of the department’s trailblazing leadership in research across our divisions, inspiring members from the entire department. It was a successful morning of inspiration and encouragement as our faculty speakers shared their insights in, and experiences, with research in surgery and in science.

The day featured talks from Dr. Mohit Bhandari, Dr. Kouroush Sabri, Dr. Sheila Singh, Dr. Marko Simunovic, Dr. Andre Lamy, and our keynote speaker Bobby Umar.

Dr. Bhandari, commenced the event with sage advice on how to build an influential and motivating network. Dr. Sabri discussed his methods of integrating research into his busy clinic and offered valuable suggestions on how to mentor new researchers. Dr. Singh illustrated the importance of integrating and complementing one’s research with one’s clinical interests. Dr. Simunovic emphasized the importance of continuous quality improvement through a population-based approach to optimize benefits and minimize detriments. Dr. Lamy shared his creative techniques for dealing with challenges in research. Finally, Bobby Umar, our keynote speaker engaged our entire audience through interactive small and whole group activities to exemplify the skills of effective leaders.

“The best decision I have made this month was to attend the Building Bridges event celebrating research in our Department. The event attendance was a testimony to the spirit of collaboration, with representatives from faculty, staff, research staff, residents and students. To me, this highlighted the teamwork that underpins any success, but particularly in research. It was also an opportunity to listen and then reflect upon both my own journey and that of the Department. Dr. Bhandari’s line up of speakers was enlightening and stimulating. I was immensely proud of the presenters and all of the participants; congratulations to Dr. Bhandari and his team for creating this event. Make sure you mark the next event on your calendar, you will be very glad you did.”

- Dr. Susan Reid, Department Chair
Publications September-December 2014

Cardiac Surgery


General Surgery


Neurosurgery


Ophthalmology

“The risk of increased vitamin D inadequacy is significantly higher during the winter and spring seasons than the summer and fall seasons.”

Dr Farrough Farrokhyar et al.
Publications Continued


“Identifying the factors that may influence patients’ preferences could provide valuable explanations for the variation on patients’ values and preferences in future research. Knowing patients’ previous perception on certain treatment options can help clinicians to explain certain things more clearly and makes clinical consultation more efficient”.

Yuqing Zhang et al.

Otologyngology


Publications Continued

Pediatric Surgery

Plastic Surgery


Thoracic Surgery


Publications Continued

**Urology**


**Other**


Please note that this list presents only articles fully in print. Articles that are epub’d before print will appear in future issues when their citations are complete.
Dr. Ghert’s poster titled, “The Epigenetic Regulation of SOX9 by MiR-145 in Human Chondrosarcoma” was selected as the Best of the Orthopaedic Research Society (ORS) in the Tumors category. Dr. Ghert has been invited to The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons Annual Meeting in Las Vegas to present her poster, as the top scored ORS abstract in Tumors category.


Dr. Michael Livingston (PGY-3) won Best Presentation at the Canadian Association of Paediatric Surgeons Conference September 18-24, 2014 for his presentation entitled: “Fundoplication versus Percutaneous Gastrojejunostomy for gastroesophageal reflux in children with neurologic impairment: a system review and meta-analysis”.

Dr. Peter Fitzgerald was installed as the new President of the Canadian Association of the Paediatric Surgeons at the recent national annual CAPS meeting.

Dr. Helene Flageole has been appointed Chair of the Paediatric Surgical Chiefs of Canada (PSSC)
A new clinical trial titled: “Glycerin Suppositories Used Prophylactically in Premature infants (SUPP): a pilot randomized placebo-controlled trial” (PI Dr. Mark Walton) will start recruiting patients on January 6, 2015. The SUPP Trial is a pilot study to assess the feasibility of a multicenter randomized controlled trial in the neonatal intensive care unit. Unfortunately, all preterm infants have problems with adequate feeding and nutrition. Giving them glycerin suppositories may be one way to help prevent these issues.

Surgical Foundations for junior residents (R1s and R2s) will be hosting two research mornings on January 14th and May 13th, both from 9am-12pm at MUMC, 4E20. The following residents will be presenting and all are welcome to attend.

**January 14th, 2015**
- Rahul Bansal (Uro)
- Taehyoung Lee (Uro)
- Yuding Wang (Uro)
- Nathan Wong (Uro)
- Nazari Dvirnik (Cardiac)
- Nicholas Afagh (GS)
- Diana Carter (GS)
- Ryan Fielding (GS)
- Andrew Giles (GS)

**May 13th, 2015**
- Sydney Godzisz (GS)
- Waed Mallah (GS)
- Ashna Patel (GS)
- Cassandra Uy (GS)
- Sherman Wong (GS)
- Asem Saleh (Vasc)
- Michelle Kameda (Neuro)
- Mazen Alotaibi (Neuro)
- Sarah Mullen (Ophthal)
Ophthalmology Resident Research Day - February 11, 2015

The Division of Ophthalmology is hosting its very first resident research day. Please save the date, February 11th 2015, more details are to come.

SOURCE: Evidence-Based Surgery Workshop on Randomized Controlled Trials - February 18, 2015, 12:30pm-4:30pm at St. Joseph’s Healthcare Hamilton Conference Room 3, Fontbonne Building

With great pleasure, Drs. Thoma, Ghert, Braga, and Farrokhyar invite all faculty, fellows, and senior residents to our half-day Evidence-Based Surgery Workshop on Appraising and Conducting Randomized Controlled Trials. This workshop is an excellent opportunity for surgeons to gain a better understanding of the principles of incorporating evidence into surgical practice. The workshop consists of small group tutorials where surgeons and tutors participate in an interactive discussion of core methodological aspects of randomized controlled trials. The workshop has been approved for Maintenance of Certification Program credits for the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons and a certificate will be provided. Lunch will also be provided.

For registration, please do not hesitate to contact SOURCE at kaurmn@mcmaster.ca. If you have any colleagues who are interested, you are welcome to extend the invitation to them.

Chair’s Rounds - February 25, 2015

Details to follow shortly.

Building Bridges Clinical Research Focus Showcase III - Coming soon!

Our Associate Chair of Research, Dr Bhandari, invites you to join him at the third Building Bridges event in our series this spring. This half day conference will provide you with an opportunity to interact with some of the top researchers in our Department, to learn from their experience and to inspire you in your research endeavours. Building Bridges is open to faculty, fellows, residents, research staff and medical students working with our surgeons.
Upcoming Funding Application Deadlines

CIHR - Institute of Health Services and Policy Research Awards
Article of the Year Award
Amount: $10,000
Deadline: February 13, 2015
This award recognizes published research that has significantly contributed to the advancement of the field of health services and policy research in Canada.
http://www.cihr.ca/e/38260.html

Rising Star Award
Amount: $1,000
Deadline: February 13, 2015
This award recognizes the research excellence or innovative knowledge translation initiatives of graduate students (Masters, PhD and Post-doctoral fellows).

The Foundation Fighting Blindness - Operating Grant
Amount: $50,000-100,000
Deadline: LOI: January 30, 2015
This grant supports research projects by scientists appointed at Canadian universities and hospitals.
http://www.ffb.ca/research/grants_awards/og_app.html

Brain Canada- Platform Support Grants
Amount: $1,000,000 for 3 years
Deadline: LOI: January 30, 2015
This award will support major research platforms that provide enhanced technical and research capability to multiple investigators working in the brain sciences.
http://braincanada.ca/en/platform_support_grants

Canadian Cancer Society Research Institute - Prevention Research Grants
Amount: $150,000/year upto 4 years
This award supports projects that demonstrate a specific and defined potential for impact on cancer incidence; multidisciplinary collaboration is encouraged.

McMaster Surgical Associates 2015-2016
AFP Members: The deadline to apply for a 2015 MSA Grant Scholarship is February 2, 2015 at 12pm.
Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada - Medical Education Research Grant
Amount: Up to $25,000/year to a maximum of $50,000 per project
Deadlines: HRS deadline: February 16, 2015   Full application: March 2, 2015
This award supports research conducted in Canada that will advance the field of postgraduate medical education or continuing professional development.
http://www.royalcollege.ca/portal/page/portal/rc/awards/grants/medical_education/meded_research_grant

Brain Canada - Multi-Investigator Research Initiative
Amount: $500,000/year upto 3 years
Deadline: LOI: February 9, 2015
This award supports multidisciplinary teams to accelerate novel and transformative research that will fundamentally change our understanding of nervous system function and dysfunction and their impact on health.
http://braincanada.ca/en/MIRI

Canadian Cancer Society Research Institute - Innovation Grants
Amount: Upto $100,000 per year upto a maximum of $200,000 per grant
This award supports projects with unconventional concepts, approaches or methodologies to address problems in cancer research. These projects will include elements of creativity, curiosity, investigation, exploration and opportunity.

Canadian Cancer Society Research Institute - Innovation to Impact Grants
Amount: Upto $150,000/year upto 3 years
This award is an extension to funding from a CCSRI Innovation grant for projects demonstrating significant findings.

Canadian Cancer Society Research Institute - Career Development Awards in Prevention
Amount: Upto $75,000/year upto 3 years
Deadlines: HRS deadline: March 18,2015  Full application: April 1, 2015
This award provides protected research time and funding for post-doc fellows, clinical fellows, and junior investigators interested in cancer prevention/risk reduction research and community-based clinical research in cancer prevention.
The Thrasher Research Fund - Early Career Awards
Amount: Upto $25,000/grant
Deadline: Concept submission: March 6, 2015
This award encourages the development of medical research in child health by awarding small grants to new Pediatric researchers.
https://www.thrasherresearch.org/SitePages/early-career-award.aspx

Canadian Cancer Society Research Institute - Impact Grants
Amount: Upto $250,000/year for upto 5 years
Deadlines: LOI: March 25, 2015    Full application: September 1, 2015
This award supports ideas that promote major advancements in research programs, from the fundamental discovery stage (model organisms) to the applied research stages (patient or population based).

DID WE MISS YOUR RESEARCH RELATED NEWS?
Submissions for the next newsletter will be requested in March 2015.