Research and Care on the topic of persistent postsurgical pain will take place on Saturday, November 7, 2015 at the end of National Pain Awareness Week. Confirmed speakers to date include Scientific Advisory Board members Mark Lema (State University of New York, Buffalo) and Henrik Kehlet (Copenhagen University Hospital, Denmark) along with institute researchers. Be sure to mark the date in your calendar. We look forward to seeing you there!

Message from the IPRC and NPC Director

One in five Canadians experience persistent unmanaged chronic pain, presenting an enormous health problem. Living with chronic pain is a debilitating experience that can last a lifetime, and have an impact upon work, school, family social and personal lives, and a significant burden on all of society.

Recognizing that prescription drug abuse is an issue of increasing concern in Canada the federal government is now directing funds to address this problem. Health Canada recently funded the Michael G. DeGroote National Pain Centre to update the Canadian Guideline for Safe and Effective Use of Opioids for Chronic Non-Cancer Pain. As part of this commitment, The Honourable Rona Ambrose, Federal Minister of Health visited McMaster on May 15th and addressed our ‘Prescribing Practices Forum – Steps Towards a National Best-Practice in Prescribing Opioids’ hosted by the National Pain Centre in partnership with Health Canada.

The new Michael G. DeGroote Pain Clinic opened its doors at McMaster University Health Sciences in June with Dr. Ramesh Zacharias as Medical Director. The new clinic will be one of the largest interventional and biopsychosocial pain programs in Canada. This brings the three pillars of the Michael G. DeGroote endowment for pain together at McMaster University – the Michael G. DeGroote Institute for Pain Research and Care, the Michael G. DeGroote National Pain Centre, and the Michael G. DeGroote Pain Clinic.

The second annual symposium of the Michael G. DeGroote Institute for Pain Research and Care on the topic of persistent postsurgical pain will take place on Saturday, November 7, 2015 at the end of National Pain Awareness Week. Confirmed speakers to-date include Scientific Advisory Board members Mark Lema (State University of New York, Buffalo) and Henrik Kehlet (Copenhagen University Hospital, Denmark) along with institute researchers.

Be sure to mark the date in your calendar. We look forward to seeing you there!

Norm Buckley,
IPRC Scientific Director,
NPC Director
IPRC News

IPRC Symposium

In November 2014, the Michael G. DeGroote Institute for Pain Research and Care held its first annual symposium on the topic of Persistent Post-Surgical Pain (PPSP) as a means of studying chronic pain; which is the strategic focus of the institute’s research. The first symposia outlined the history of the institute to-date and introduced several projects underway.

The symposium introduced the five members of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), several in the role of speakers, as well as introducing members of the institute and some of their original work. SAB members include Canadians Manon Choinière (Université de Montréal), Ian Gilron (Queen’s University), Joel Katz (York University) and international members Mark Lema (State University of New York, Buffalo) and Henrik Kehlet (Copenhagen University Hospital, Denmark). Professor Choinière opened the meeting with her work on prevalence and risk factors for persistent non-anginal pain in patients having undergone coronary artery bypass grafting; Ian Gilron asked ‘Persistent post-surgical pain – can it be prevented?’ Joel Katz discussed the idea of persistent post-surgical pain as a model for the study of chronic pain.

Institute researchers presented a series of original works; James Kahn and PJ Devereaux on observations of persistent post-surgical pain arising out of the first cohort of more than 20,000 patients in the VISION study of cardiac morbidity and mortality following non-cardiac surgery; Michael McGillion on the FORESITE-VISION cardiac collaboration in identification of modifiable predictors of persistent post-surgical pain in cardiac surgery. Li Wang and Jason Busse presented their progress report on a systematic review of predictors of persistent post-surgical pain with particular focus on post-mastectomy pain, and Gurmit Singh presented on novel biological mechanisms of pain. James Paul reviewed the potential impact of anesthetic techniques on PPSP, James Bain discussed surgical technique and its contribution to PPSP, and Joy MacDermid presented the perspective of rehabilitation sciences on PPSP.

During the breaks there were poster presentations from trainees which gave the opportunity for considerable interesting discussion to complement that taking place during the meeting itself. Following the meeting the researchers met, along with the institute executive for discussion of the institute’s mission and vision and progress to-date, receiving the input of the first meeting of the Scientific Advisory Board.

IPRC Awards 2015

Seed Projects: The first IPRC award competition saw three seed projects awarded providing principal investigators an opportunity to kick-start their pain research projects. Value: $30,000 (one year maximum). Awarded projects include:

Effect of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) for reducing persistent post-surgical pain – Pilot Study. PI: Dr. Jason Busse.

Coming into ‘SMArT VIEW’: A pilot study to elicit system requirements for the SMArT VIEW post-operative pain self-management intervention. PI: Dr. Michael McGillion.

HIP fracture Accelerated surgical Treatment And Care (HIP ATTACK) Pain Sub-study. PI: Dr. Harsha Shanthanna.

Graduate Award: Yasir Rehman was awarded the first PhD graduate studentship. Yasir will begin his program in September 2015 under the supervision of Dr. Jason Busse. Value: $20,000 (three years maximum). Project title: Predictors of the persistent post-surgical pain and the poor outcomes in spinal decompression surgery.
PainHQ

At the 2014 Canadian Pain Society meeting, the Michael G. DeGroote Institute for Pain research and Care introduced the creation of the PainHQ website. We are now pleased to announce the launch of this website, an on-line resource for individuals living with neuropathic pain. PainHQ will provide access to a range of evidence-based resources supporting over two million Canadians living with neuropathic pain and their caregivers, personal stories, e-learning videos, webinars and expert blogs will make up part of the site’s diverse offerings – http://www.painhq.org/

Upcoming webinars include:

**Systematic Review of Treatment for Central Post-Stroke Pain.** Tuesday, August 11, 2015 11:00 am – 12:00 noon. Dr. Jason Busse will discuss a systematic review of treatment for central post-stroke pain (CPSP). Treatment of CPSP is challenging and many patients do not experience sufficient pain relief. Part of the difficulty in finding sufficient treatment is the results of a lack of complete understanding of the mechanism of CPSP, its causes as well as the co-existing psychological and emotional aspects of chronic pain.

**Interventional Treatment for Neuropathic Pain.** Thursday September 17, 2015 12:30 - 1:30 pm. Dr. Norm Buckley will discuss Interventional treatments for neuropathic pain that can range from nerve blocks to spinal cord stimulation. Learn about different kinds of interventions, how they work and which are used most effectively for different types of neuropathic pain.

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**Scientific Director Appointment**

Congratulations are extended to Dr. Norm Buckley on accepting the position Scientific Director of the Michael G. DeGroote Institute for Pain Research and Care effective July 1, 2015. He has held the role of Acting Scientific Director since 2014. This appointment recognizes Dr. Buckley’s commitment in bringing together dedicated researchers, staff and trainees with an interest in the understanding of chronic pain to advance research in this important area.
Prescribing Practices Forum

On May 15, 2015, The Honourable Rona Ambrose, Federal Minister of Health, attended our Prescribing Practices Forum at McMaster University. This marked an important milestone in the federal government’s efforts to work closely with partners to tackle prescription drug abuse.

The forum, funded by Health Canada and hosted by the Michael G. DeGroote National Pain Centre, brought together regulatory authorities, health professionals, provinces and territories and experts to identify steps to improve prescribing practices, with the ultimate goal of reducing the abuse of prescription drugs.

During her address, the Minister underscored the Government’s commitment to fighting prescription drug abuse by announcing federal funding in the amount of nearly $8 million to support six projects focused on improving prescriber education and the development of a coordinated national approach for the monitoring and surveillance of prescription drugs.

The Prescribing Practices forum is one of several ways the Government is supporting initiatives to combat prescription drug abuse. Recent investments include $13.5 million over five years to improve addictions prevention and treatment services for First Nations living on-reserve, and through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), Health Canada has expanded the national research network aimed at improving the health of Canadians living with substance abuse to include prescription drug abuse.

L to R: MP David Sweet, Dr. Trevor Theman, Registrar, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta; Minister Ambrose; Dr. Michael Hamilton, Physician Lead and Medication Safety specialist, Institute for Safe Medication Practices Canada; Dr. Norm Buckley, Director Michael G. DeGroote National Pain Centre, McMaster University.
When the Michael G. DeGroote National Pain Centre assumed responsibility and copyright for the Canadian Guideline for Safe and Effective Use of Opioids for Chronic Non-Cancer Pain, it committed to updating the guideline within five years of its release in 2010. The national, evidence-based guideline exists to guide primary-care physicians and specialists to safely and effectively use opioids to treat patients with chronic non-cancer pain.

Update of the guideline has now begun with several systematic reviews underway to provide the information base for the guideline revision. Funding from Health Canada was awarded to Dr. Jason Busse to support the process. The update process will involve a national collaboration including researchers and clinicians from across the country.

The guideline is a practical resource to provide Canadian physicians with the best available information, research and consensus of opinion on this topic. It complements other approaches to facilitate legitimate use of opioids while addressing potential abuse. These include public education, improved treatment of both pain and addiction, establishment of prescription databases, tamper-resistant medication preparations and treatment contracts between physicians and patients.

Our upcoming annual National Faculty Meeting will focus on the process of the guideline update.

A nationwide group of pain researchers and clinicians submitted a Letter of Intent (LOI) to the CIHR SPOR (Strategy for Patient Oriented Research) competition for the development of a Canadian chronic pain network. In March we were pleased to learn that our LOI application was successful, ranking third out of thirty-five! The key principal applicant on the project is Dr. Norm Buckley. Other key applicants include Dr. Christine Chambers (behavioural scientist, Dalhousie University), Dr. Luda Diatchenko (human pain genetics, McGill University), Dr. Ian Gilron (clinical pain research, Queen’s University), Dr. Pierre Fréchette (Medical Advisor to the Ministry of Health and Social Services, Quebec), and Maria Hudspith (Executive Director of Pain BC).

We propose to create a network to address the problem of chronic pain in Canada throughout the lifespan, with a view to better understanding chronic pain, identifying those most at risk, and treating patients appropriately and safely. Pain is typically thought of as a symptom of another disease, but in its chronic form it is in fact a disease, altering physiology, changing behaviour, and leading to deterioration of function in personal, social and employment spheres. In the call for SPOR applications, CIHR has duly recognized chronic pain as a chronic disease entity. The key applicants for our proposal encompass the full range of expertise and geographic representation. Our network will be structured to incorporate the input from our patient engagement group into research direction. Research will occur across the lifespan, examining the impact of sex and gender, and interactions amongst behavioural and social determinants of health. Our mission, ‘To innovate and improve the quality and delivery of pain prevention, assessment, management and research for all Canadians’ will be achieved through pursuit of the following research themes: applied and translational pre-clinical research, applied and translational behavioural pain research, clinical trials and observational studies, health services pain research and the creation and examination of patient registries and databases.

Concerted effort is now underway to develop the full proposal that is due October 15th. CIHR will award a total of four SPOR applications with a value of twenty-five millions dollars each -- $12.5 M from CIHR and $12.5M from matching funds.
My Opioid Manager

In 2010 the Opioid Manager was developed by Dr. Andrea Furlan as a point-of-care tool for physicians to use when prescribing opioids for chronic non-cancer pain. A related patient tool was released in February 2015; My Opioid Manager (MyOP). My Opioid Manager was developed to help individuals considering opioid therapy to better understand and describe their pain, communicate effectively with their primary health care provider about opioids, and safely manage their pain with their medication on a long-term basis.

Together an app and a book serve as an education tool allowing patients to track and manage their opioid intake through use of diaries and questionnaires. The free app can be downloaded on a mobile device from the Apple iTunes Store for iPhone and iPad, or through the Google Play Store for android devices. The app contains an electronic version of all the diaries and questionnaires available in the book. The benefit of the app is the capability to fill in the forms with a high degree of interactivity. Patients can print their work or email it directly to their health care provider. The book contains instructions and examples on completing the forms. For information visit: http://www.opioidmanager.com/index.html

Pain Medicine Residency Website

A new website for Pain Medicine Residency hosted by the National Pain Centre is now available. Pain medicine is a new two-year sub-specialty residency initiated by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC). This program will offer unparalleled learning opportunities leading to RCPSC certification in pain medicine. The new web portal is supported by the Earl Russell endowed Chair at Western University.

Eligibility requirements include FRCP certification (or in a program leading to certification) in the following areas: anesthesiology, emergency medicine, internal medicine, neurology, pediatrics, physical medicine and rehabilitation, psychiatry and rheumatology. Entry from other FRCP programs such as orthopedics, neurosurgery and palliative care is possible in exceptional cases.

The University of Western Ontario accepted their first residents in July 2014. Other programs such as the University of British Columbia, University of Toronto, University of Ottawa, and Universite de Montreal are planning to start training residents by July 2016. For more information or application information visit: http://fhs.mcmaster.ca/pain-medicine-residency/

Interprofessional Education Program in Pain

The National Pain Centre along with the McMaster Waterloo Region Campus Undergraduate Medical program, the University of Waterloo School of Pharmacy, University of Waterloo School of Social Work, Wilfrid Laurier University School of Social Work and the Conestoga College School of Nursing, collaborated for the third year on an interprofessional education program in pain. This year the program kicked off in May with a presentation by the Kitchener Downtown Community Health Care Centre providing the perspective of managing pain in the community. Student feedback continues to support the offering of this program which includes short lectures and small group problem-based learning that follows the International Association of the Study of Pain (IASP) interprofessional education curriculum.

Visiting Student

PhD candidate Dr. Carlos Almeida was welcomed by the National Pain Centre as our first visiting student. Carlos traveled from the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sol, Brazil in August 2014 to work with Dr. Jason Busse. His six month research project included a protocol for a systematic review of predictors of in-hospital mortality among tuberculosis patients. Carlos worked with Dr. Li Wang on the study of predictors of persistent pain after breast cancer surgery. This method is being used for the broader topic of how to analyze prognosis of persistent post-surgical pain.
Canadian Pain Society Meeting

The 36th annual conference of the Canadian Pain Society Meeting was held at the Delta Conference Centre in Charlottetown, PEI from May 21-23, 2015. A booth sponsored by the National Pain Centre and the Institute for Pain Research and Care provided information to conference attendees on activities and initiatives underway.

Symposia presentations by institute members at the conference included:


Poster presentations:


Upcoming Events

Updating the Canadian Guideline for Safe and Effective Use of Opioids for Chronic Non-Cancer Pain. Michael G. DeGroote National Faculty Meeting. McMaster University, Hamilton, ON. Friday, July 17, 2015. Keynote speaker: Dr. Gordon Guyatt, Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, McMaster University.


Pain Interprofessional Curriculum Design Workshop. October 28-30, 2015. Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto. Course goal: To provide an opportunity to explore the strategies and components in the design of a pain interprofessional curriculum for health professionals within the context on one’s own institution. http://bit.ly/PICD2015

