

# Canadian Association of Gastroenterology Research Committee report



Canadian Association of Gastroenterology

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The goal of the Research Committee is to build, in collaboration with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology (CAG) partners, Canadian capacity and expertise in the discipline of gastroenterology and nutrition, and to promote excellence in research. As chair, I am pleased to update the CAG membership and *The Canadian Journal of Gastroenterology* readership on the activities of the Research Committee over the past months.

I gratefully acknowledge the work completed by the entire Research Committee (Table 1). On behalf of the CAG, I would like to thank Dr Chris Chadee (Chair 2005–2008) and committee members Drs Jan Huizinga, Karen Madsen, Donna-Marie McCafferty and Paul Moayyedi who completed their term this past February. The assistance of CAG National Office staff – Mr Paul Sinclair, the CAG National Executive Director, Ms Sandra Daniels, Manager and Ms Palma Colacino, Administrative Assistant – is also appreciated.

Details relating to eligibility and application processes for all of the following awards are available on the CAG Web site at <[www.cag-acg.org/research.aspx](http://www.cag-acg.org/research.aspx)>. The review and assessment of every application complies with CIHR standards and guidelines and any potential conflicts of interest are meticulously identified and avoided.

### Grants

Six applications in the New Investigator competition and eight applications in the Operating Grant categories were reviewed. One New Investigator Grant and five Operating Grants were awarded (Table 2).

### Fellow-to-Faculty Transition Award

Three applications for transition awards were received in this year's competition. One award, generously partnered with the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada (CCFC) and CIHR, was awarded (Table 3).

### CAG-CIHR-partnered Postdoctoral Operating Fellowship Program

The fellowship program is the cornerstone in the CAG research activities and its sustained success makes it a model for

**TABLE 1**  
**Members of the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology Research Committee (2008-2009)**

Member	Institution	Term
Chair – Stephen Vanner (MD)	Queen's University	2008–2011
Mark Silverberg (MD, PhD)	University of Toronto	2006–2009
John Brumell (PhD)	University of Toronto	2006–2009
Francois Boudreau (PhD)	University of Sherbrooke	2007–2010
Thomas Michalak (MD)	Memorial University	2007–2010
Bruce Vallance (PhD)	University of British Columbia	2007–2010
Paul Beck (MD)	University of Calgary	2008–2011
Alan Lomax (PhD)	Queen's University	2008–2011
John Marshall (MD)	McMaster University	2008–2011
Dana Philpott (PhD)	University of Toronto	2008–2011
Elena Verdu (PhD)	McMaster University	2008–2011
Isabella Tai (MD)	University of British Columbia	2008–2011

other societies. This year, 33 fellowship applications were received. With support from CIHR, the CCFC, and CAG's industrial partners (see acknowledgements), 15 fellowships were funded (Table 4) – a 45% success rate. Twelve of 24 applications (50%) from PhD scientists and three of nine (33%) applications from MD scientists were funded.

### CAG summer studentships

It is critical that young investigators be supported at all levels of their training. Thus, in partnership with the CCFC, 20 students received awards (salary plus a small operating budget; \$6,000/award) to work in laboratories of recent or established investigators whose interests cover many facets of gut function (Table 5). Twenty-six applications were reviewed giving an approximate success rate of 77% in this year's competition.

### Resident Research Program

Six applications were reviewed for this competition. One award was made available with the generous partnership from Procter & Gamble (Table 6).

The CAG is proud to acknowledge its Benefactor Corporate Sponsors:

Abbott Canada

AstraZeneca Canada Inc

Axcan Pharma Inc

Olympus Canada Inc

Pentax Canada Inc

Procter & Gamble Pharmaceuticals

Schering-Plough Canada Inc

UCB Pharma Inc

**TABLE 2**  
**Canadian Association of Gastroenterology-Canadian Institutes of Health Research partner-funded grants (2008)**

Candidate	Industrial partner*	Years	Institution	Type of grant
Michael Beyak	Nycomed Canada	2	Queen's University	New Investigator
Alan Barkun	Olympus Canada	2	McGill University	Operating
Christophe Faure	Abbott Canada	2	University of Montreal	Operating
Gilaad Kaplan	Abbott Canada	2	University of Calgary	Operating
Monika Keelan	AstraZeneca Canada Inc	2	University of Alberta	Operating
Elyanne Ratcliffe	AstraZeneca Canada Inc	1	McMaster University	Operating

\*No applications were received for the Shire IBD Operating Grant

**TABLE 3**  
**Canadian Association of Gastroenterology-Canadian Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada-Canadian Institutes of Health Research partner-funded Transition Award (2008)**

Candidate	Years	Institution
Aleixo Muise	4	The Hospital for Sick Children

Congratulations to all the successful award recipients. We look forward to your contributions and your continued participation in Canadian GI research and CAG activities. And again, many thanks to CIHR and the CAG partners – the 20 summer studentships, one resident research award, 15 fellowships, one transition award, and six grants add up to a research dollar commitment in 2008 of \$2,455,000!

#### Canadian Digestive Diseases Week 2008 and the 4th Annual Canadian Association for the Study of the Liver winter meeting

In addition to reviewing research applications, the other main role of the research committee is review of abstracts submitted to the Canadian Digestive Diseases Week (CDDW) which showcases the best of Canadian GI research. A total of 306 abstracts were accepted to the core CDDW/Canadian Association for the Study of Liver (CASL) Winter Meeting

scientific program; 48 as CAG or CASL oral presentations and the remainder in one of three poster sessions.

The following are the 2008 recipients of CAG awards:

- Dr Stephen Vanner (Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario) Research Excellence Award
- Dr John Marshall (McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario) Young Investigator Award
- Dr Phil Sherman (The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, Ontario) Visiting Professor Award
- Dr Des Leddin (Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia) Education Excellence Award
- Dr Sylvain Coderre (University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta) Young Educator Award
- Dr Stephen Collins (McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario) The RD McKenna Memorial Lecturer.

This year's student research prizes were awarded, based on the quality of submitted CDDW abstracts to: Ms J Rybicka, University of Calgary and Mr L Kalishuk, University of Calgary (CAG sponsored) and Ms M Hunter, University of Calgary and Mr M Legeune, University of Calgary (CCFC sponsored).

The CDDW Implementation Committee has the program well under way for the 2009 meeting. You can review the preliminary program and register for the meeting on the CAG Web site at <[www.cag-acg.org/cddw.aspx](http://www.cag-acg.org/cddw.aspx)>.

**TABLE 4**  
**Canadian Association of Gastroenterology (CAG)-Canadian Institutes of Health Research partner-funded Postdoctoral Fellowships (2008)**

Candidate	Industrial partner*	Years	Institution	Supervisor(s)
Francisco Bautista-Cruz	AstraZeneca Canada Inc	2	Queen's University	William Paterson
Donna Daly	Axcan Pharma Inc	2	Queen's University	Michael Beyak
Eduardo Diez	CAG	1	McGill University	Samantha Gruenheid
Pierre-Yves Gougeon	Janssen-Ortho	2	Queen's University	Michael Blennerhassett
Smita Halder	Schering Canada	2	University of Toronto	Mark Silverberg
Christina Hirota	Abbott Canada	2	University of Calgary	Wallace MacNaughton
Yongzhong Hou	AstraZeneca Canada Inc	2 (+1)	University of Calgary	Kris Chadee
Ju Huang	CCFC	2	The Hospital of Sick Children	John Brumell
Seamus Hussey	CCFC	2	The Hospital of Sick Children	Nicola Jones
Marcela Miranda-Morales	AstraZeneca Canada Inc	2	Queen's University	Stephen Vanner
Marinieve Montero	CCFC	2	University of British Columbia	Bruce Vallance
Vikas Srivastava	AstraZeneca Canada Inc	2 (+1)	University of Calgary	Kris Chadee
Christopher Teshima	Ferring Pharmaceuticals	1	University of Alberta	Jon Meddings, Richard Fedorak, Levinus Dieleman
Rosica Valcheva	Abbott Canada	2	University of Alberta	Levinus Dieleman
Guangzhi Zhang	BMS	2	University of Alberta	Andrew Mason

\*No applications were received for the Pentax Therapeutic Endoscopy Fellowship; BMS Bristol-Myers Squibb Canada; CCFC Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada

**TABLE 5**  
**Canadian Association of Gastroenterology-Canadian Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada-funded**  
**Summer Studentships (2008)**

Candidate	Sponsor	Institution	Supervisor
Maaike deVries	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada	Queen's University	Alan Lomax
Akira Gillingham	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada	McGill University	Samantha Gruenheid
Shirley Ho	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada	University of British Columbia	Isabella Tai
Yida Jiang	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada	University of Toronto	Stephen Girardin
Darryl Karpel	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada	University of Toronto	Ken Croitoru
Michelle Ma	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada	McMaster University	Kathy McCoy
Christopher Ma	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada	University of Calgary	Gilaad Kaplan
Natalie Ronaghan	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada	University of Calgary	Wallace MacNaughton
Megan Sherman	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada	McGill University	Ernest Seidman
Hang Shi	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada	University of Toronto	Jennifer Gommerman
Shivangi Trivedi	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada	University of Toronto	Patricia Brubaker
Linda Yuan	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada	University of Toronto	Dana Philpott
Ausma Ahmed	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	University of Toronto	Patricia Brubaker
Michael Catarino	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	University of Calgary	Derek McKay
Jinglan Han	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	University of Calgary	Mark Swain
Ada Hung	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	University of Toronto	Jan Irvine
Émilie L Couture	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	University of Sherbrooke	Patrick Laprise
Pearl Leung	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	University of Calgary	Kris Chadee
Lesley Meng	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	University of Western Ontario	Carol Creuzenet
Kathryn Wills	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	University of British Columbia	Timothy Kieffer

**TABLE 6**  
**Canadian Association of Gastroenterology-funded**  
**Residents Research Award (2008)**

Candidate	Sponsor	Institution	Supervisors
Ken Parhar	Procter & Gamble	University of Alberta	Paul Beck, Derek McKay

#### Research Topics in GI Disease VIII Meeting

Held in October 2008, at The Holiday Inn, Toronto, Ontario, 42 students and trainees, both basic science and clinical, were invited to give oral presentations and six established or junior faculty served as mentors. This really is a trainee meeting, with the students and fellows chairing the sessions and dominating the discussion periods. Feedback from the trainees was once again overwhelmingly positive – clearly this is a beneficial and much-enjoyed event. Financial support was provided by AstraZeneca Canada Inc, the CCFC and the CIHR Institute of Diabetes, Nutrition and Metabolism and the scientific program

was reviewed by Drs G Greenberg (University of Toronto), K Croitoru (McMaster University), S Vanner (Queen's University), and G Tolomiczenko (CCFC), with the CAG National Office coordinating the abstract submission, meeting management and event.

It has once again been an excellent year for Canadian GI research and everyone involved deserves congratulations. Should CAG members have questions relating to the work of the Research Committee or proposals on how to expand or promote our activities, please contact me or any member of the committee.

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