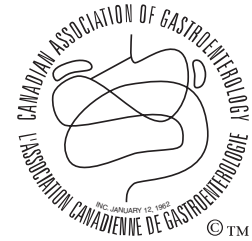


CAG Research Committee Report

Kris Chadee PhD

Chair, Canadian Association of Gastroenterology Research Committee
University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta



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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.

First, I gratefully acknowledge the work done by the entire Research Committee (Table 1). On behalf of the CAG, I would like to thank Drs Young-In Kim, Jonathan Meddings and Andrew Stadnyk 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 Karen Moricz, Administrative Assistant – is also appreciated.

It was another excellent year for investment in gastrointestinal (GI) research in Canada, and I am pleased to report that every CAG member, from undergraduate student to professors and clinicians, now has an opportunity to apply for and receive research or training support.

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

AWARDS

Operating grants

The New Investigator Grant in partnership with ALTANA Pharma Inc and the CIHR was awarded to Alan Lomax (PhD, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario) for a project titled "Neural control of submucosal arterioles during colitis" and the CAG Operating Grant, in partnership with Abbott Laboratories Ltd and the CIHR, went to William Paterson (MD, Queen's University) for the project "Studies on the pathophysiology of nitrergic neurotransmission in the lower esophageal sphincter of W/Wv mutant mice". Two applications in the new investigator competition and four applications in the operating grant competition were reviewed.

TABLE 1
Members of the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology Research Committee (2006-2007)

Member	Institution	Term
Chair – Kris Chadee PhD	University of Calgary	2005-2008
Alison Fox-Robichaud MD	McMaster University	2004-2007
Linda Rabeneck MD	University of Toronto	2004-2007
Nathalie Rivard PhD	Sherbrooke University	2004-2007
Andre Buret PhD	University of Calgary	2004-2007
Paul Moayyedi MD	McMaster University	2005-2008
Donna-Marie McCafferty PhD	University of Calgary	2005-2008
Karen Madsen PhD	University of Alberta	2005-2008
Jan Huizinga PhD	McMaster University	2005-2008
Mark Silverberg MD	University of Toronto	2006-2009
John Brumell PhD	University of Toronto	2006-2009
Elena Verdu (postdoctoral fellow)	McMaster University	–
Stephen Vanner MD*	Queen's University	–

*Representative of the Canadian Digestive Health Foundation

Fellow-to-faculty transition award

No applications for transition awards were received in this year's competition.

CAG and 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 other societies. This year, 29 fellowship applications were received. With support from CIHR, the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of Canada (CCFC), the Canadian Digestive Health Foundation (CDHF) and CAG's industrial partners (see acknowledgements), 15 fellowships were funded (Table 2) – a 52% success rate (same as last year). Eleven of 23 applications from PhD scientists (48%) and four of five applications from MD scientists (80%) were funded.

The CAG is proud to acknowledge its Benefactor Corporate Sponsors:

Abbott Laboratories Ltd
Janssen-Ortho Inc

ALTANA Pharma Inc
Pfizer Canada Inc

AstraZeneca Canada Inc
Procter & Gamble Pharmaceuticals

Axcan Pharma Inc
Schering Canada Inc

TABLE 2

Canadian Association of Gastroenterology and Canadian Institutes of Health Research partner-funded postdoctoral fellowships (2006)

Candidate	Industrial partner	Years	Institution	Supervisor
Poonam Dharmani	AstraZeneca Canada	2 (+1)	University of Calgary	K Chadee
Deanna Gibson	AstraZeneca Canada	2 (+1)	University of British Columbia	B Vallance
Eikichi Ihara	AstraZeneca Canada	2 (+1)	University of Calgary	J MacDonald
Gary Martin	AstraZeneca Canada	2 (+1)	University of Calgary	J Wallace/M Perretti
Eytan Wine	AstraZeneca Canada	2 (+1)	University of Toronto	P Sherman
Bianca Arendt	Axcan Pharma Inc	2	University of Toronto	J Allard
Indranil Dey	Axcan Pharma Inc	2	University of Calgary	K Chadee
Denny Demeria	CCFC	2	University of Alberta	K Madsen/M Ma
Michael Johnston	CCFC	2	McMaster University	D McKay
Veronica Swystun	CCFC	2	University of Calgary	W MacNaughton
Dan Turner	CCFC	2	University of Toronto	A Griffiths/H Steinhart
Hongying Wang	CCFC	2	University of Calgary	W MacNaughton
Ivan Ivan Pacheco Blandino	Ferring Pharmaceuticals	1	Queen's University	J MacLeod
Bingxian Wang	Janssen-Ortho Inc	2	McMaster University	J Huizinga
Constantine Karvellas	Schering Canada Inc	2	University of Alberta	J Wendon/A Mason

CCFC Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of Canada

TABLE 3

Canadian Association of Gastroenterology (CAG) and Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of Canada (CCFC)-funded summer studentships (2006)

Candidate	Sponsor	Institution	Supervisor
Diane S Ahn	CAG	University of Toronto	N Jones
Michael Prystajecy	CAG	University of Calgary	K Chadee
Alexandra Shaffer	CAG	University of Calgary	N Vergnolle
Karl Torbicki	CAG	University of Toronto	N Jones
Phil Bach	CCFC	University of Alberta	K Madsen
Simon Houston	CCFC	Queen's University	M Blennerhasset
Nikolaus Jewell	CCFC	McMaster University	K Croitoru
Travis Murdoch	CCFC	University of Alberta	R Fedorak and C Slupsky
Michael Peplowski	CCFC	University of Calgary	W MacNaughton
Ariella Zbar	CCFC	University of British Columbia	I Tai

PhD studentships

Last year, in partnership with the CIHR and AstraZeneca Canada Inc, two two-year studentships (Alexandra Merckx-Jacques, University of Western Ontario; Elizabeth White, McMaster University) and two one-year studentships (Patrick Lam, University of Toronto; Catherine McKay, McMaster University) were awarded (value of \$21,000/year). Applications for the 2006-2007 academic year are currently under review at CIHR, a process in which CAG and CDHF are not involved. Three two-year awards will be offered in partnership with CDHF and AstraZeneca Canada Inc.

CAG summer studentships

It is critical that young investigators be supported at all levels of their training. Thus, in partnership with CCFC, 10 students received awards (salary plus a small operating budget;

TABLE 4

Canadian Association of Gastroenterology-funded Residents Research Award (2006)

Candidate	Sponsor	Institution	Supervisor
Yvette Leung	Procter & Gamble	University of Calgary	R Myers
Andrew Xuan	Novartis Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc	McMaster University	P Moayyedi and D Armstrong

\$5,000/award) to work in laboratories of recent or established investigators whose interests cover many facets of gut function (Table 3). Eighteen applications were reviewed, giving an approximately 56% success rate in this year's competition.

Resident research program

The resident research program, launched in 2003-2004, provides GI residents with \$5,000 to fund research projects that can run throughout an academic year. With support this year from Procter & Gamble and Novartis, two candidates applied and were granted the award (Table 4).

Congratulations to all the successful awardees. 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 10 summer studentships, two resident research awards, 15 fellowships and two grants add up to a research dollar commitment in 2006 of \$2,125,000. Simply outstanding!

Canadian Digestive Diseases Week 2006

In addition to reviewing research applications, the other main role of the Research Committee was the organization of Canadian Digestive Diseases Week (CDDW), which showcases the best of Canadian GI research. A total of 192 abstracts were submitted and accepted to the core scientific program: 18 as oral presentations and the remainder in one of two

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poster sessions. Based on the previous year's needs assessment of the CAG membership, basic science symposia were held: Good Microbe – Bad Microbe (chaired by A Buret, University of Calgary and K Madsen, University of Alberta); and IBD – Unraveling Mechanisms to Define New Therapies (chaired by P Sherman, University of Toronto and J Wallace, University of Calgary). A workshop on the transition from trainee to faculty was organized and chaired by A Buret and K Chadee.

The following are the 2006 recipients of CAG awards:

- Dr Keith Sharkey (University of Calgary) – Research Excellence Award
- Dr Nathalie Rivard (University of Sherbrooke) – Young Investigator Award
- Dr Gordon Greenberg (University of Toronto) – Visiting Professor
- Dr Lloyd Sutherland (University of Calgary) – Education Excellence Award
- Dr John Marshall (McMaster University) – Young Educator Award
- Dr Peter Cotton (Medical University of South Carolina) – The RD McKenna Memorial Lecturer.

This year's research prizes, based on the quality of submitted abstracts to CDDW 2006, were awarded to: Ms MP Tétreault, University of Sherbrooke, Mr S Kammanadiminti, University of Calgary (CAG sponsored), Ms G Fortin, McGill University and Mr RDP Stanzel, Queen's University (CCFC sponsored).

The implementation committee 2007 has already convened and plans are underway for CDDW 2007.

Research Topics V meeting

At the Research Topics V meeting, held in October 2005 at the Kingbridge Centre, King City, Ontario, 39 trainees, both

basic science and clinical, were invited to give oral presentations, and six established or junior faculty served as mentors (Can J Gastroenterol 2006;20:45-6). 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 and the scientific program was reviewed by Drs G Greenberg (University of Toronto), K Croitoru (McMaster University) and K Chadee, with the CAG National Office coordinating the abstract submission, meeting management and event.

The Research Topics VI meeting is set for October 13-15, 2006. As usual there will be a call for abstracts. Any topic relating to GI is eligible (independent of the broad topics identified on the abstract form) and abstracts are selected for presentation based on review of scientific merit.

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.

*With thanks,
Kris Chadee PhD (kchadee@ucalgary.ca)
Chair, CAG Research Committee*

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