

See inside Dr. Nagendran's organ perfusion lab!

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Better medicine. Better outcomes.



"Our focus in on developing technologies to keep organs preserved outside of the body. It gives us the opportunity to assess organs that we think might not be suitable for transplantation but actually may be okay if we have the opportunity to show that they are actually usable. "

Dr. Jayan Nagendran, Associate Professor, Department of Surgery, and Dr. Darren Freed, Associate Professor, Department of Surgery, have created Canada's first ex-vivo multi-organ perfusion laboratory. Their focus is on developing technologies to keep organs preserved longer outside of the body. Their lab performs large animal organ perfusions on lungs, hearts, livers, and kidneys. Their research is paving the way to allow more human donor organs to be utilized for transplantation.

 **NACTRC Quarterly Updates**

NACTRC's strategic focus is to advance clinical and health outcomes research. The decentralized nature of research supports at the University of Alberta (UAlberta) has sometimes made accessing these valued supports challenging.

Recently, NACTRC and the University of Alberta's Quality Management in Clinical Research (QMCR) Office made a significant step forward by integrating services. Scott Jamieson, the lead of QMCR, is now also the Director of Clinical Operations. Many synergies, efficiencies and opportunities have developed from this integration, as we are now able to more quickly coordinate efforts to identify the right resources for investigators and sponsors. This effort is enhanced by having NACTRC's Research Administration and Clinical Operations co-located in the same office.

Similarly, the SPOR Data Platform led by Dr. Finlay McAlister and Dr. Jeff Bakal has also chosen to co-locate with NACTRC, which further enhances collaborative opportunities, including in Real World Evidence and Pragmatic Clinical Trials.

On the research administration side, coordinating efforts and expertise with the UAlberta and Alberta Health Services has led to improvements in the completion of contracts. NACTRC, TEC Edmonton, the Research Services Office, as well as the Province's Finance and Research Administration, work together to ensure contracts contain the required information and are processed efficiently.

Come visit us at our new office: Suite 400, College Plaza.

NACTRC would like to acknowledge the recent passing of Dr. Sumit 'Me2' Majumdar, who was a well-respected clinician-scientist in the Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry. His interdisciplinary research focused on complex medical conditions such as osteoporosis, diabetes, hypertension, heart and lung diseases, and obesity. We would like to extend our sympathies to his family at this time.



Welcome to the *Clinical Research Corner*, which is designed to provide brief updates regarding clinical research from the Office of Research, Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry (FoMD). Questions, comments or feedback? Please email [Dr. Jillian Byrne](mailto:Dr.Jillian.Byrne@ualberta.ca) (Director of Clinical Research, FoMD).

Learning Opportunities

Clinical Research Seminar Series

The series kicked off in 2018 with the recent seminar on January 24th and two more upcoming seminars in February. Additional information [here](#); slides from previous seminars are available [here](#).

1. Research Contracts 101 (**February 13th, 2:00pm**) [details](#)
2. Expert Clinical Trialist Panel – Q & A (**February 28th, 2:00pm**)

Updates

Piloting a New Approach to Contact Patients for Research

Many researchers will agree that recruitment is one of the most challenging aspects of clinical research. To pilot a new approach, we collaborated with Alberta Health Services and the SPOR Data and Pragmatic Clinical Trials Platforms to contact patients for participation in a research study via postal mail.

In early December 2017, nearly 2000 letters were strategically sent on behalf of AHS to potentially eligible patients who might be interested in participating in a heart health study being conducted by Dr. Justin Ezekowitz (Department of Medicine, Division of Cardiology). We are closely monitoring response rates and the cost effectiveness of this approach to determine potential applicability to other research studies in the faculty.

Research Collaboration in the FoMD

There are a number of groups and stakeholders involved in clinical research in the faculty. In an effort to ensure consistent information sharing and encourage future collaborations, we have developed the Clinical Research Initiative Working Group. Representatives of various stakeholders within and beyond the FoMD such as NACTRC, REO, QMCR, and RSO as well as institutes (e.g., WCHRI, CRINA) and large research groups (e.g., CVC, GILDR)* met for the first time in November to discuss common challenges and how we can synergize to help overcome barriers as a group.

*Acronyms:

NACTRC – Northern Alberta Clinical Trials + Research Centre

REO – Research Ethics Office

QMCR – Quality Management in Clinical Research

RSO – Research Services Office

WCHRI – Women & Children's Health Research Institute

CRINA – Cancer Research Institute of Northern Alberta

CVC – Canadian Vigour Centre

GILDR – Gastrointestinal and Liver Disease Research Group

Research Revenue

We are happy to report that we have observed a year-over-year increase since 2015 in all research dollars (*e.g.*, local and provincial funding; tri-council research funding; industry-related funding) awarded to clinical researchers in the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry. We hope to continue this upward trend in 2018!

Cannabis Legalization

The legalization of cannabis will be implemented in Alberta in July 2018. The aim of the [Albertan Government](#) is for cannabis legalization to “create an environment where cannabis can be purchased and consumed more safely than it is today”. Logically, this policy change will give way to new and unique areas of research related to cannabis, such as workplace impairment, health care utilization and promotion, and long-term health outcomes. On October 30th, 2017 Alberta Health Services hosted a Cannabis Research day – learn more [here](#) about the discussions, and how you can become involved in the forthcoming research agenda.

Announcements: What's New?

Be The Cure Clinical Trials Database

As part of the [Be The Cure](#) public awareness initiative, we recently launched a [clinical trials database](#) designed for patients and the public to search for actively recruiting trials by location, age, and sex. Since launch in November, our database has been accessed by more than **3,600** users with over **15,000** searches made in 2 months! Please contact [Jill Byrne](#) for more information or if you would like to be involved in pilot testing the next phase of this project.

FAQs

Q: Where is the data coming from?

A: All data is currently being mined from [clinicaltrials.gov](#). Information from all registered trials on clinicaltrials.gov are publically available.

Q: Why is my clinical trial not in the database?

A: If your trial is not currently registered with clinicaltrials.gov then it will not be in our database. While registration is only required for trials testing drugs, biologics and devices, we encourage researchers of all clinical trials to register with clinicaltrials.gov given this is a requirement for publication in many reputable scientific journals.

Q: Why is my completed study in the database?

A: This might be because your trial is still registered as 'active' with clinicaltrials.gov. If this is the case (*i.e.*, your study is completed but shows as 'actively recruiting' in clinicaltrials.gov), we would strongly encourage you to update your trial registration to accurately reflect the study's current status. Please contact [Sarah Marsh](#) if your study is in our database and **not** classified as actively recruiting in clinicaltrials.gov.

Q: What about clinical research studies that are not trials?

A: Given that our current data source is clinicaltrials.gov and other clinical research studies (*e.g.*, observational, qualitative) do not require registration on this platform, they are not currently included in our database. That being said, there are plans for the next phase of our project to include a wider range of health research studies.

Q: What are the next steps of this project?

A: Given that our current data source is not perfect, the next phase will involve multiple improvements, including the voluntary, opt-in capture of data from ethics applications. We aim to launch this phase in 2018.

Search the Trials Database

The Be the Cure campaign wrapped up in Calgary in mid December. We partnered with Alberta Health Services, the University of Alberta, and the University of Calgary to support a public awareness initiative on the importance of getting involved with health research. The campaign generated over 3.7 million impressions during its 8 week run.

We're excited to announce that the campaign will be running again this October in the Calgary area. You can help us spread the message. Be The Cure is only as strong as the voice we have. The best thing you can do to further public involvement in health research is help us grow our network, spread the word, and raise awareness of the importance of health research.

Follow Be the Cure on social media and check out some of the video stories at bethecure.ca/stories.

Clinical Research In Progress

Celebrating Success with Dr. Raj Padwal



Dr. Raj Padwal (Professor, Department of Medicine) is a general internist and clinical researcher with a strong interest in understanding the benefits of portable, home-based monitoring of patients with hypertension.

Based on the premise that the measurement of patient's blood pressure at the doctor's office is not always accurate, in 2016 Dr. Padwal received a four-year \$750K operating grant through the eHealth Innovation Partnership Program from CIHR (Canadian Institutes of Health Research) to monitor the blood pressure of seniors in supportive living. This study, which is currently ongoing, aims to *(i)* improve the coordination of senior's health care and *(ii)* evaluate the cost-effectiveness of home-based blood pressure monitoring.

In alignment with this research, Dr. Padwal developed a spinoff company called mmHG, which is preparing for the commercial release of a portable, cuff-based system in 2019. The aim of this device is not only to monitor blood pressure but also transmit data to smart devices. In November 2017, Dr. Padwal's innovation was celebrated at the [TEC Edmonton 2017 Innovation Awards Ceremony](#) where he was one-of-four individuals lauded for the development of his spinoff company.

Learn more about Dr. Padwal's recent innovation award [here](#).

In The News

Edmonton Journal: New online database aims to improve participation in Alberta clinical research

<http://edmontonjournal.com/>

Jeevan Nagendran creates Western Canada's first dedicated program for "closed chest open heart surgery" and the University of Alberta Hospital's new Gamma Knife offers scalpel-free brain surgery.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/3929343/3-mind-blowing-health-innovations-from-edmonton-in-2017/>

Research lacking on medicinal cannabis: doctors' groups

<http://nationalpost.com/pmnews-pmn/canada-news-pmn/research-lacking-on-medical-pot-ample-evidence-of-harms-doctors-groups>

Paul Armstrong named officer of Order of Canada for transformative research and leadership in Canadian health care.

<https://www.folio.ca/cardiology-pioneer-awarded-canadas-highest-honour/>



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