

Department Head Blog
February 24th, 2021

This week's edition of the Blog is a day late for no other reason than it is the last week of February and life simply caught up with me! With Spring less than 4 weeks away, it is perhaps appropriate that the majority of this blog will not focus on COVID.

First some very exciting and happy news. Please join me in congratulating **Dr. Rachel MacIntosh**, one of our senior PEM residents, on the birth of her baby girl on February 5th. **Claire Elizabeth MacIntosh** joined her parents and older brother and by all reports, is settling in quite nicely. On the day of Claire's birth, the **Government of Nova Scotia** officially approved the funding and construction of a **new state-of-the-art emergency department for the IWK**. Over the last five years, there has been a 17.5% increase in patient visits to the IWK ED. Government will invest about **\$100 million over the next four years** to double the size of the emergency department to address increases in volume, patient complexity, mental health concerns and encourage world-class innovation among care providers. This is an exciting opportunity for the Division of Pediatric Emergency Medicine to shape the future of care for the patients and families they serve across the Maritimes.

Onsite clinical research has resumed at the IWK ED in January. Recruitment of participants have pivoted to reflect the need for physical distancing. Research staff have successfully adopted these new processes and have been able to actively recruit participants in situ, via cell phones, for the **PRIMED study**; a precision medicine-based bio-profiling study to identify children with true appendicitis from those with other causes of abdominal pain. Kudos to the IWK research staff for making this work.

The IWK ED is also actively involved in a number of studies related to COVID 19. In partnership with **Pediatric Emergency Research Canada (PERC)** and the **Public Health Agency of Canada** we are currently recruiting children for a **national surveillance study looking at clinical characteristics and outcomes of children potentially infected by SARS-CoV-2**. Other COVID related studies include: a global **Pediatric Emergency Research Network (PERN)** study examining **the severity of children's illness from SARS-CoV-2**, an Emergency Department utilization study, a safety study on the **novel use of an epinephrine MDI for the treatment of croup** and a study exploring the **impact of COVID-19 and self-isolation on patient burden, acuity and severity**.

Despite the ongoing pressures of responding the pandemic, I have been repeatedly impressed by the efforts of members of **DalEM** to continually engage in the "normal" activities in support of our Department's mission and vision. The ongoing work in Saint John is an excellent example of this. Under the leadership of **Dr. Paul Atkinson**, New Brunswick has organized into an **Emergency Medicine Regional Clinical-Academic Network**. This is an exciting opportunity for collaboration in the province building on the expertise of our NB faculty members. **Dr. Rachel Goss** is the new **Director of Quality Improvement**. Rachel is UK Royal College trained and joined the NB group in the Spring of 2020. The **SJRH Emergency Medicine Website** has been recently updated and I would encourage you to visit this excellent resource. The three-year **integrated CCFP-EM** program hosted

by the department is the only one of its kind in Canada. The embedded video provides a brief overview of the program and highlights the many advantages of the iFMEM residency program. Proving that education does not end with the completion of residency training, **Dr. James Gould**, class of 2020, was offered a spot in the **Queen's University Resuscitation Fellowship** program starting July 1st. This year, the fellowship will be offered virtually. James is hoping to translate his experience into building a strong resuscitation program within **DalEM**.

DalEM faculty have been very active early in 2021 with numerous publications featuring collaborative efforts between members in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick:

1. Look inside as well as out: an unexpected cause of shortness of breath: right ventricular mass on point of care ultrasound. **T Dahn, R Henneberry, P Atkinson** - Canadian Journal of Emergency Medicine, 2021
2. Just the facts: point-of-care ultrasound for airway management M Gottlieb, P Olszynski, **P Atkinson** - Canadian Journal of Emergency Medicine, 2021
3. When Cannabis Use Goes Wrong: Mental Health Side Effects of Cannabis Use that Present to Emergency Services CE Crocker, **A Carter, JG Emsley, K Magee, P Atkinson** - Frontiers in Psychiatry, 2021
4. Longitudinal Integrated Clerkships: Do they provide advantages in times of disruption. **S Field**, R Boulay – MedEdPublish, 2021.

Dr. Kirstin Weerdenburg's recent publication, **The Variable Journey in Learning to Interpret Pediatric Point-of-care Ultrasound Images: A Multicenter Prospective Cohort Study**, was featured in an **Ultrasound G.E.L. Podcast**.

Nova Scotia Health's Making Waves Awards program recognizes individuals and groups who have made outstanding contributions to the health and well-being of Nova Scotians. Information to **nominate a deserving researcher, research team member or innovator** working to advance the vision and strategic directions of Nova Scotia Health can be found here: Making Waves Awards | Nova Scotia Health Authority - Corporate (nshealth.ca). The deadline for nomination is February 28th at 4 PM.

The Medical Research Development Office is pleased to launch the **2021 Faculty of Medicine Summer Student Research Program**. More information can be found at the following link: <https://medicine.dal.ca/research-dal-med/capacity/ssrp.html>. Any questions, or expressions of interest from researchers looking to host a student through this program, can be sent to Shirin Shaikh at shirin.shaikh@dal.ca. The application deadline date is March 31st, 2021. As always, if you have any comments, suggestions or news you would like me to share, I can be reached at emergency.medicine@dal.ca.

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