



**DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY**

Inspiring Minds

DAL Surgery

THE UPDATE

January 2010



Message from the Department Head



Dr. Bonjer was at once both a traditional and thoroughly modern Department Head. While he appealed to our naturally conservative instincts, he was also pointing the way to the future. Co-management, a Surgical Skills Center, a Provincial Surgical Network, an integrated MOTP Program and an AFP with academic enhancement are just the most visible parts of his legacy. His departure has been a bit like being at sea and having the captain washed off the deck by a big wave. Now what?

As it turns out, our governance structure has rendered our Department inherently stable in the event that we lose a key person. The Department Executive consisting of the Department Head, the Division Heads and the Chairs of the Finance, Research and Education Committees jointly runs the affairs of the Department by consensus. It wasn't always like this. Five years ago, the Surgical Executive was merely an advisory council to the Department Head.

For the moment, I have the privilege of trying the Department Head hat on for size. It is probably less disruptive to have someone who is near the end of a long run on Cabinet do it than someone just starting down that road. Dr. Marrie, our Dean, has started the process to find us a new Chair and the Search Committee will include Drs. David Alexander and Geoff Porter as our representatives. Meanwhile, there is far too much before us to stay on cruise control. Stalled AFP negotiations with other Departments is an indication that there is not yet consensus about how academic medical programs should be funded. Chronic financial pressures challenge us to do more with less and yet stay above standard of care thresholds. Our medical school curriculum needs urgent attention. Despite all of this, there is great reason for optimism. At this moment there are many people in leadership roles in government, in our hospital system and our medical school who share a common vision for a more integrated, streamlined university health care network. Our challenge will be to not squander this fortuitous alignment of interests.

Dr. David Kirkpatrick
Interim Head, Department of Surgery

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***Important Date: Thursday, April 29, 2010 ~
Dal Surgery Research Day***

THE UPDATE

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Please forward any comments
and ideas for contributions to:

Elaine Marsh

Department of Surgery
Research Office
RMH 8-846 VGH
1278 Tower Road
Halifax, NS B3H 2Y9

Production: Elaine Marsh

DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY ADMINISTRATION

Crystal Marsman

Executive Assistant
to Dr. David Kirkpatrick
crystal.marsman@dal.ca

Theresa Halliday

Financial Coordinator
theresa.halliday@dal.ca

Giselle Romans

Administrative Assistant
Financial
giselle.romans@dal.ca

Sheila Reid

Education Coordinator
Department of Surgery
sheila.reid@dal.ca

Elaine Marsh

Research Administration
elaine.marsh@dal.ca

Lesli Smith

Human Resources
lesli.l.smith@cdha.nshealth.ca

Michelle Murray

Coordinator Skills Centre
for Health Services
murraym@cdha.nshealth.ca

Message from the Director of Research



WE HAVE MANY GREAT REASONS to be proud of our Research Community this year. One year ago, we started with a very thorough external review of our research programmes by Dr. Ori Rotstein, from the University of Toronto. His constructive criticisms have helped us refine our research goals as a Department and give us some key strategic advice for accomplishing these. The Committee, after digesting the

report, has chosen to alter our “investment strategy” to include new program support grants. In addition, key opportunities in both cancer research and research education were pointed out and the Committee is exploring strategies to move these agendas forward. Finally, opportunities to partner with CDHA and Dal Faculty of Medicine to realize more research resources were pointed out by Dr. Rotstein as areas worthy of exploration. The Department is currently looking at opportunities to partner our resources to move forward with targeted fund raising for educational research.

In 2009, we again awarded approximately \$400,000.00 in research support, including three program grants to transplantation, hearing and musculoskeletal research groups. In addition, we funded resident salary awards (four in number) match funding and seed grants.

At this year’s Research Information Day, we witnessed the breadth and depth of research efforts sited at Dal Surgery Research truly spanning the research world from basic bench science to translational research and on to health outcomes and health policy research. Dr. Adrian Levy, the new Head of Community Health and Epidemiology gave an excellent talk on researching health delivery in Cardiac Surgery and made it clear that CH&E was open for business from a collaborative point of view. The ‘menu’ for prospective resident researchers was rich and varied, and all locally produced!!

As we embark on 2010, a major undertaking in the DAL SURGERY research office is the production of an annual report to depict our continued research productivity and, more importantly, the impact of our research activity on patient care and improved patient outcomes. This will provide all important accountability for the investment being made in the academic mission of Dal Surgery, and as a key document in focusing us for the next year, both in terms of where to invest our resources, and to identify the research stories that will attract additional investment in research.

Dr. Greg Hirsch, Director of Research

New Faculty

Dr. Michael Biddulph



DR. BIDDULPH became a staff Orthopedic Surgeon at the Halifax Infirmary in July 2009. He has a special interest in both primary and metastatic malignancies of the musculoskeletal system at the QEII.

He graduated from Dalhousie University Medical School and orthopedic residency and went on to do fellowships in complex joint reconstruction and revision arthroplasty in Sydney, Australia; and Musculoskeletal Oncology in Bologna, Italy and Toronto, Canada.

Dr. Michael Biddulph was born in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia. He is accompanied by his wife and four sons and looks forward to a long career serving the people of Nova Scotia, *Welcome Dr. Biddulph!*

Dr. Gordon Budahan



DR. BUDAHAN earned his undergrad education in his home province at the University of Manitoba. He graduated from the University of Toronto Medical School and returned to the University of Manitoba to complete his general surgery residency. During his residency, Dr. Budahan studied the physiologic effects of lung volume reduction surgery to achieve his MSc graduate degree.

His fellowship in thoracic surgery was completed at the University of British Columbia. He also obtained secondary fellowship training in minimally invasive thoracic and foregut surgery at the Swedish Medical Centre in Seattle, Washington.

Dr. Budahan became a member of the Department this past year as an Assistant Professor in Thoracic Surgery. His clinical interests embrace thoracic oncology, minimally invasive thoracic and esophageal surgery, while his continued research interests include outcome studies in lung and esophageal cancer, pleural mesothelioma, and minimally invasive applications in thoracic surgery.

We welcome Dr. Budahan, his wife Venessa and daughter Alivia to the Dal Surgery community!

Dr. John Stein



DR. STEIN joined the Department of Surgery in August 2009 as an Assistant Professor in Plastic Surgery. He graduated from the University of Western Ontario Medical School and completed his residency in plastic surgery at the same institution. His fellowship in Adult Craniofacial Reconstruction was carried out at the University of Toronto under the supervision of Dr. Oleh Antonyshyn. His clinical interests include post traumatic deformities, cleft-lip/palate rhinoplasty and congenital anomalies. Dr. Stein also concentrates a great deal of his clinical practice to facial skin cancer ablation and reconstruction, as well as hand surgeries.

We welcome Dr. Stein and his family to Halifax!

Dr. David B. Clarke



DR. DAVID B. CLARKE was born in Nova Scotia and received his Bachelor of Science degree from Acadia University. He then moved to Montreal, obtaining his Doctor of Medicine degree from McGill University. On completion of his neurosurgical residency at the Montreal Neurological Institute, he received the Penfield Award in Neurosurgery. He earned his PhD in neuroscience from McGill University, where he was awarded a Medical Research of Canada Fellowship. His resident research was recognized by being awarded the K.G. McKenzie Memorial Award for basic neurosciences research from the Canadian Neurosurgical Society as well as the Canadian Research Award for Specialty Residents from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

He returned home to Nova Scotia in 1997, to join the Division of Neurosurgery where he is currently Vice-Chair. He is a Professor within the Departments of Surgery (Neurosurgery and Otolaryngology), Medicine (Endocrinology), Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, and Anatomy & Neurobiology. He serves on the National Executive of the

Canadian Association for Neuroscience and is Vice-Chair of the Royal College's Neurosurgery Specialty Committee. Dr. Clarke is a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and the American College of Surgeons.

At Dalhousie, and as Director of the Neuron Survival and Regeneration Laboratory, he has continued to study neuronal response to injury in the central nervous system. In recognition of this research, Dr. Clarke was awarded Dalhousie's Clinical Research Scholar Award. His laboratory currently receives funding from CIHR and NSERC.

His clinical interests are predominantly in the areas of the surgical treatment of epilepsy, management of pituitary tumors, functional MRI brain imaging and patient outcomes following traumatic brain injury. In his clinical practice, Dr. Clarke is Director of the Division's Surgical Epilepsy Program, working collaboratively with Neurosurgeons and Neurologists to provide the best possible care to individuals debilitated by epilepsy. With Dr. Imran (Endocrinology) he Co-Chairs the Halifax Neuropituitary Program, a program that has set a national standard for the comprehensive care of patients with pituitary tumours. He is delighted to work with Dr. Massoud (Otolaryngology) in pioneering endoscopic transsphenoidal surgery in Atlantic Canada. As head of the Neurosurgery's Neurotrauma Research Program, he works closely with Dr. Simon Walling of the Injury Prevention Program; Drs. Clarke and John Tallon (Emergency Medicine) developed the Nova Scotia Head Injury Guideline, the first such province/state-wide guideline to be implemented in North America. He is a leading collaborator with many community and government agencies and is an avid proponent of the promotion of injury prevention.

In 2009, Dr. Clarke was the first in the world to perform virtual reality brain surgery, an achievement resulting from his work on the International Advisory Council of the National Research Council's project to develop a virtual reality environment for patient-specific surgery. As an innovative and progressive leader, Dr. Clarke feels that this technology will fundamentally change how surgical residents are trained and how surgeons prepare for surgery.

Dr. Clarke is known as a trusted, kind and deeply caring physician whose capacities as a researcher, teacher and clinician are admired by those who have had the privilege to work with him. He served as the Program

Director, Neurosurgery Residency Training Program from 2000-2006. As a gifted educator, his innate teaching abilities allow him to seize every moment as an opportunity in which something can be learned. His humor, although unique, is seldom lost on the quick-witted, but his serious tone punctuated with his special brand of puns, jokes or commentaries is an attribute quickly learned and appreciated by all. Dr. Phillippe Magown, a neurosurgical resident best encompasses this very "unique" sense of humour, as he relays a story from his first year of residency, and one of his initial meetings with Dr. Clarke:

Dr. Clarke was the Neurosurgery Program Director when I started my residency. One week into my first rotation on service, I was paged to his office "urgently". Having been on call the night before, I was justifiably worried that I must be in some type of trouble. I was asked to wait in the hall outside his office and my arrival was announced to him. Dr. Clarke opened his office door, stood inches from my face and with grave seriousness said, "Phillippe, we have something urgent to discuss". Immediately, in his office, he looked down, staring

at me. Needless to say, I was quite worried, recalling the previous night's call, and rattling my brain for what had happened to be deserving of such a page, and soon to be an inevitable scolding. A few long seconds of painful silence followed, only to be asked, "Phillippe, have you registered for the Neurosurgery Golf Challenge next week?" He hid his laughter well, reminding me that it was "mandatory for all residents to participate." Finally able to breathe, I was relieved, considering I thought I was going to tender my resignation when I entered the room. He escorted me out of his office, and his secretary offered me valuable advice telling me, "I would get use to his sense of humour, and should I reserve a set of clubs for you, or do you have your own?"

Besides managing a busy career as a researcher/clinician, Dr. Clarke has an active role as husband and father. He has been married for twenty-one years to Susan and they have two young children, Alison and Andrew with whom he enjoys sailing, travelling ...and of course, when they're older, golfing.....

Neurosurgical Simulator

The world's first virtual reality brain surgery was performed by Dr. David Clarke in August, 2009. The neurosurgical simulator project, spearheaded by the National Research Council (NRC), involves a cross-Canada collaboration of high-profile and nationally renowned clinical collaborators and research scientists in Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax. Patient MRI imaging studies were obtained at the Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre; then, using the virtual reality neurosurgical simulator, Dr. Clarke and his team mapped out the tumour and the subsequent surgical approach.

This innovative neurosurgical simulator will revolutionize neurosurgical training and signals a significant leap forward in patient care and safety, allowing doctors to rehearse complex surgeries long before a patient enters the surgical suite.



Promotions and Awards

Congratulations to the following members for their professional promotions:

Dr. Guy Brisseau – Associate Professor

Dr. David B. Clarke – Professor

Dr. Mark Glazebrook – Associate Professor

Dr. Greg Hirsch – Professor

Dr. J.F. Legare – Associate Professor

Dr. Geoff Porter – Professor

Dr. Jeremy Wood – Associate Professor

Departmental Achievements:

Dr. Michael Dunbar in the Department of Orthopaedics was awarded the Dalhousie Innovation Award for Life Sciences by the Office of Industry Liason and Innovation.

Dr. Mark Glazebrook, in the Division of Orthopaedics was awarded the 2009 ABC Traveling Fellowship from both the Canadian and American Orthopaedic Associations.

Dr. David Clarke, Division of Neurosurgery performed the first virtual brain surgery in Nova Scotia.

Dr. Carman Giacomantonio was awarded a Senior Clinical Scholar Award from the Faculty of Medicine.

Congratulations to **Dr. Michael Dunbar** and his team in hosting the first International Symposium on Clinical and Scientific Research in Radiostereometric Analysis (RSA), which was held in Ingonish, NS this past fall.

Message from the Director of Education



A NUMBER OF EXCITING INITIATIVES are currently taking place in the undergraduate forum. We have on-going collaboration with the basic science and Dalhousie IT groups creating computer based modules for the third year surgery seminar series. The Med I and Med II Patient-Doctor Units are currently being revised and will have outcome based and over-arching objectives to further enhance this experience.

All of the Surgical Residency Training Programs at Dalhousie will be undergoing Royal College Internal Reviews in mid March.

Attending staff Education Deliverables are being collected, reviewed, and will be presented to Cabinet in February.

Congratulations to Dr. Jeremy Wood who was presented with the 2009 PARI-MP excellence in teaching award.

Dr. Brock Vair, Director of Education

Research Profile: Cardiovascular Research Group



IN 2003 DR. GREG HIRSCH became the Director of the Cardiovascular Research Group (CVRG) at the Dalhousie Medical School. During Dr. Hirsch's Leadership, this multidisciplinary group of researchers and clinicians saw the

development of the CVRG in collaboration with the Dalhousie Medical Research Foundation. Over \$500,000.00 was raised in fundraising campaigns with the DMRF. These monies were allocated for the support of a translational cardiovascular research facility, the purchase of staple equipment and renovations of a 1000sq ft space (3L Tupper) for multidisciplinary members. Monies are being used presently to set up studentships, bursaries and to further purchase equipment to be used by all members.

Dr. Hirsch oversaw the first Wine and Cheese Social for the CVRG, where all members and their students come together to discuss and present ongoing research projects. This will remain a staple event, as it has fostered collaboration within the group.

In September, 2009, Drs. Stacy O'Blenes, Department of Surgery and Division of Cardiac Surgery, and Susan Howlett, Department of Pharmacology (pictured to the left) were named the new Co-Directors of the Cardiovascular Research Group. The CVRG presently has over a dozen key clinical and basic science researchers representing a wide range of divisions and departments at the medical school.

The CVRG is looking forward to promoting collaborative interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research on a strong cardiovascular foundation among researchers at Dalhousie University; to building a higher capacity in cardiovascular research through training and recruitment; and to promoting and advancing cardiovascular wellness for all Nova Scotians.

The CVRG will be constructing a webpage, where you will be able to find valuable information on the group's research initiatives, seminars and activities, as well as research interests of the individual CVRG members and laboratories. After construction and launch of the webpage, newly opened positions for trainees will be posted.

We wish the CVRG best luck in its quest to improve cardiovascular health in the Martimes and beyond!

CVRG Membership 2010



Co-Directors:

Dr. Stacy O'Blenes
Cardiac Surgery

Dr. Susan Howlett
Pharmacology

Members:

Dr. JF Legare
Cardiac Surgery

Dr. Greg Hirsh
Cardiac Surgery

Dr. Michael Schmidt
Anesthesia

Dr. Steve Burrell
Diagnostic Imaging

Dr. James Clarke
Diagnostic Imaging

Dr. Robert Rose
Physiology

Dr. Frank Smith
Anatomy and Neurobiology

Dr. John Sapp
Cardiology

Dr. Kishore Pasumarthi
Pharmacology

Dr. Camille Hancock Friesen
Cardiac Surgery

Dr. Robert Chen
Cardiology

Retirement: Dr. Elhamy Attia

Submitted by Dr. Timothy Brown



DR. ELHAMY ATTIA, professor and Head of the Department of Otolaryngology at Dalhousie University from 1987-1999 retired at the end of 2008 after a long and extremely distinguished career.

Dr. Attia began his medical training in Egypt, graduating from Alexandria University in 1962 with his MBChB. Upon moving to Canada in the mid-1960's he completed a rotating internship and a year in general surgery before beginning his Otolaryngology residency at McGill, finishing in 1970. He completed a clinical and research fellowship in Gainesville Florida in 1972 and returned on staff to McGill in 1972.

From 1972-1987 he worked on staff at Montreal General Hospital as an Otolaryngologist with emphasis on Head & Neck oncology and reconstructive surgery, becoming one of the preeminent Head & Neck surgeons in Canada.

In 1987 a new challenge beckoned when he was offered the position of Head of Otolaryngology at Dalhousie University, a position he held (often concurrent with the program director position!) until 1999. Under his leadership, the Division was essentially rebuilt from the ground up and the foundations laid for what is now acknowledged as an extremely vibrant division with a reputation for excellence in research, post-graduate training and clinical care. He spearheaded the initial negotiations

into what would eventually become the first surgical academic funding plan. With the creation of the Voice and Dysphagia clinics within the division he proved to be an early pioneer in emphasizing the importance of a multidisciplinary approach.

Committed to life-long learning, in the last 10 years of his career, Dr. Attia took a clinical sabbatical to update his knowledge and skills in the fledgling subspecialty of laryngology, serving as the only laryngologist east of Montreal until his retirement.

In addition to his leadership roles in administration and clinical care, Dr. Attia has an extensive list of educational and research accomplishments. He has previously served as chief examiner for Otolaryngology at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. His research interests were extremely broad, from head & neck oncology to rhinology and even inner ear physiology. Those who worked with him were always amazed at the breadth and depth of his knowledge; often well beyond the boundaries of his specialized practice.

Outside of medicine, Dr. Attia was extremely active in his church and was surrounded by a loving and supportive family. Anyone who ever phoned his home in the middle of the night knows how pleasant his wife, Mona, was... even at the most awful hours!

Lastly, Dr. Attia will surely be missed by his patients. His soft-spoken, quiet and confident manner always brought calm to the most difficult situations and his patients always appreciated it and those who trained under him surely benefited from his example.

Dal Surgery would like to welcome our newest surgical residents:

GENERAL SURGERY

Jonathan Bailey
Daniel French
Richard Liu
Peter Nicholson
Hasan Odeh

PLASTICS

Peter Davison
Simon Frank

ORTHOPAEDICS

Bryan Flynn
Matthew Lewington
John McPherson
Scott Williams

ENT

Elaine Fung
Matthew Grandy

CARDIAC

Yogesh Lala
Hani Mufti

NEUROSURGERY

Krystal Thorington