



**DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY**

Inspiring Minds

DAL Surgery THE UPDATE

January 2011



Dr. David Kirkpatrick Head of Department of Surgery



Given the constant gloomy financial world news and the equally unhappy economic forecasts coming our way from our Med School, CDHA, as well as the Department of Health, it should come as no surprise to learn that budget obsession is now in vogue. It turns out that there really is a lot we can do to save our institution operating capital and stave

off future surgery slowdowns.

Co-management has come along just at the right time. Over the past year, surgical leaders have been working closely with managers, directors, the VP Person Centered Care, Paula Bond as well as personnel from the CFO's office to improve efficiencies and reduce costs. We have discovered that there is considerable common ground and our efforts are making a significant difference.

The Department of Surgery is lucky to have Gerry McKean covering the financial waterfront. He and our numbers savvy finance committee have kept our department in good financial shape. He also chairs a newly struck

Finance Review Committee, a Subcommittee of the OR Committee that is reviewing every cent spent in the OR. Though inventory management, device standardization, reprocessing as well as other strategies, the ORs at CDHA are on target to save half the OR budget deficit this fiscal year without affecting quality or reducing surgeries.

On a more academic note, Dr Adrian Park, our new Department Head, will take up his duties in March. His ambitions for our department are perfectly aligned with our strategic plan, so right from the start we will all be paddling the boat in the same direction. His plan to develop a surgical simulation education program that marries with the Surgical Skills Center is very forward thinking. He brings to us considerable experience as an academic surgery program administrator who has already dealt with many of the new world order issues we still face.

I am delighted that two of our members have assumed significant leadership positions. Dr. Drew Bethune is now CDHA Director of Oncology and Dr. Carman Giacomantonio is Director of Cancer Care Nova Scotia.

For me it has been both a pleasure and an honor to serve as the interim leader. As I head into the home stretch I am even more optimistic about our future than when I started.

IN THIS ISSUE

Head's Message – Dr. David Kirkpatrick
Research Message – Dr. Greg Hirsch
Education Message – Dr. Brock Vair
Research Profile: General Surgery
Research Office

Clinical Investigator Program
New Faculty
Life Science Research Institute
Departmental News
Faculty Profile: Dr. David Kirkpatrick

Important Dates

April 29, 2011
**Dal Surgery
Research Day**
Cunard Centre

THE UPDATE

This is a publication of
DAL SURGERY.

This will be published
by the **DAL SURGERY**
Research Office.

Please forward any comments
and ideas for contributions to:

Elaine Marsh

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

DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY ADMINISTRATION

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

Director of Research ~ Dr. Greg Hirsch



THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

remains committed to building research capacity and enhancing the research culture in the Department of Surgery.

We are fortunate in the Department of Surgery to host and support leading researchers in Otolaryngology, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedics, Cardiac Health, Transplant and Cancer. Each of these exciting research programs stimulate additional productivity, enhance research dollar capture, impact their respective fields and raise the visibility of Dalhousie and Capital Health research nationally and internationally. We remain committed to providing opportunities and facilities for the research training of Surgery Residents. Resident research remains a high priority for the committee budgets and adjusted annually to meet the financial demands of their dedicated study periods. The upcoming academic year, five residents will defend a Master's Thesis in recognized Dalhousie Faculty of Graduate studies programs. This initial investment in resident re-

search initiatives will procure a future of professionals educated and trained to make a difference in how they practice medicine. Here at Dal Surgery, we believe the partnership of research and clinical practice as a winning combination to produce and recruit the best clinicians. By retaining these residents and attracting ones like them to our faculty, we will gain a greater presence among the leading research universities in Canada and abroad.

We have sent out the call to our faculty for funding in seed, bridge, match and program support. Our 2009 annual research budget reflected a movement to secure departmental funding dollars primarily for group/program support. Collaboration and research team building allow newer faculty to seamlessly protect time to engage in research, as well as increase the productivity of our established researchers. Leadership in research, mentoring in research, and providing opportunities for research remain the cornerstone for the Dal Surgery Research Committee.

I would like to thank Dr. David Kirkpatrick, who so unselfishly stepped into the role of Head of Surgery. His support of the Research Committee was unwavering. We thank him for the trust and support. We are excited to welcome Dr. Adrian Park into his new role as the Head of the Department, and look forward to many more years of research growth.

Director of Education ~ Dr. Brock Vair

THE DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY CONTINUES to contribute significantly to both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels of education within the Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie. Many of us have accepted elective students from medical schools across the Country who are interested in Dalhousie as a potential site for residency training in surgery. Surgeons are involved in the problem based curriculum at the first year level as well as the established COPS curriculum for the second year class. A number of us are also involved in the new clinical skills program for the first year students, and we continue to contribute to the seminar series for the surgical unit in third year clerkship.

At the undergraduate level, Dr. Min Lee from Vascular Surgery has worked with the undergraduate leaders of the Surgical Interest Group to organize a skills night at the Skills Centre in the Bethune Building. This will involve basic instruction in a wide variety of surgical skills, particularly knot tying and suturing. Dr. Guy Brisseau from Pediatric Surgery will attend a professional night in December with the view to providing an outline of the day to day life within a surgical career and answer questions regarding various aspects of training for and practicing in surgery. Various Program Directors within the Department of Surgery, as well as residents, were involved in the Medical School Career Night which was held at the Tupper Building on November 23. This event allowed students with an interest in a surgical career to ask questions and explore the various aspects of residency training in surgery.

The Undergraduate Surgical Education Committee has looked at establishing a variety of learning aids for the third year students that will enable them to expand their learning beyond the seminar series and clinical experience on the surgical floors.

The clinical and procedures logs are now part of the evaluation process for our third year students and should enable the students to track their experience with several of the basic clinical exposures from within the various surgical disciplines.

Dr. Chad Coles, Surgery Clerkship Director, has revised the third year objectives, which are now

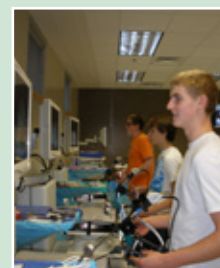
concise and outcome based. These should serve as a model for objectives in undergraduate surgery across the Country.

At the postgraduate level, the issue of training, supervising and evaluating residents within the confines of reduced work hours is being addressed under the leadership of Dr. Martin Gardner, the Postgraduate Dean at Dalhousie. Committees have been formed to evaluate both the educational and professionalism aspects of restricted work hours. A Summit has been scheduled for December 2, which will involve a number of educational leaders from within the Faculty, which will hopefully provide some solutions to this increasingly important issue. These will include initiatives to improve the efficiency of educational duties among the resident staff.



On the Cover

The Department of Surgery hosted grade 9 students in November for "Bring Your Kids to Work Day". Students enjoyed an excellent day in the Patient Simulation Lab and in the Surgical Skills Lab. A special thanks to Crystal Marsman, Dr. Adam Law and Dr. Sam Minor. Also great thanks to Michelle Murray and Jason Follet in the Skills Lab. These grade nine students had a wonderful experience!



Research Profile ~ General Surgery Research Office

THE DALHOUSIE GENERAL SURGERY RESEARCH OFFICE on 7th Floor Victoria houses research staff with expertise in clinical research design, trial management, database development and analysis, and research ethics/process/document development. The members of the research office are:

Karen Inglis provides research support to General Surgery staff and residents including protocol development, ethics submission, budget development, research process, and policy awareness. Karen began with the Department in 2001 with the Access to Care study (Dr. Geoff Porter), a prospective study of wait times associated with breast, colon and gastric cancers. Karen also coordinated randomized trials for Dr. Alex Mitchell during his residency at Dalhousie, comparing Ibuprofen plus Acetaminophen to Tylenol #3 for post op pain management for outpatient hernia repairs, cholecystectomy, and breast surgery.

Karen also provided direction to establish an ethics approved clinical database to track clinical outcomes and provide real time evaluation of care in the Hernia Clinic at the QEII.

Karen assumed international management of a large randomized trial comparing open vs laparoscopic removal of rectal cancer (COLOR II) in 2008, as well as ethics and site management for the Dalhousie COLOR II site. Since that time, the office has expanded the COLOR II trial to include patients from 34 hospitals in 10 countries including Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Korea, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and the USA. Over 1100 patients were randomized as of the close of the trial in May 2010, and short term results will be published shortly.

In addition to her linkages with the international surgery research community, Karen provides a bridge between clinical care and the basic science labs at Dalhousie. Dr. Carman Giacomantonio's work and that of other scientists such as Dr. Patrick Lee is supported by obtaining ethics approval for the collection of tissue, patient consent, establishing process for tissue collection, and liaising with surgeons, pathologists and scientists for the timely delivery of tissue. There are currently 3 tissues sampling studies underway. Another study, MELODY, is a retrospective cohort study of treatment patterns and outcomes in melanoma currently awaiting ethics approval.

Kevin Druhan is the Clinical Data Manager for the Division of General Surgery. Over the past 3 years he has developed numerous databases and performed data management and data analysis for clinical trials and research projects in the following areas: breast cancer surgery (T3AI), rectal cancer (Atlantic Rectal Cancer Survey and Canadian Rectal Cancer Survey), colorectal neoplasia, fistulas, ostomies, gastric cancer, hernia repair surgery, laparoscopic management of accessory spleen, and orthopedic surgery. He also developed and manages the Hernia Clinic clinical/administrative database and is the data manager for a large international clinical trial comparing open and laparoscopic surgery for rectal cancer (COLOR II). Kevin also provides support to the Dept of Surgery such as development and support of their Staff Information Database and electronic Teaching Dossier log, as well as regular updates to the Division of General Surgery website.

Karim M Eltawil, MD is a Clinical Research Fellow with HPB & Transplant Surgery. His current research projects include *Duodenopancreatectomy versus Best Supportive Care for Pancreatic Adenocarcinoma – Measuring Patients' Inclinations toward Risks; and Benefits Before Suggesting Treatment Options and Measuring Patients' Quality of Life after Transarterial Chemoembolization (TACE) for Hepatocellular Carcinoma*, both with Dr. Michele Molinari as PI. As well Karim is working on *Outcomes of Pancreatic Cancer Surgery: an Institutional Retrospective Analysis (1999-2010)* with Dr. Mark Walsh as PI. Karim has three manuscripts in preparation.

John Fris, Research Assistant, is a new hire in the Division of Thoracic Surgery/Pathology this year working with Dr Drew Bethune and Dr Zhaolin Xu. The project: *PI3K-Akt/PKB Pathway and its Clinical Significance in Human Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer* is slated for recruitment until 2015. John will supervise the collection and management of the data with an emphasis on relational database design and statistics. He has previously worked in the Middle East and has collaborated with several investigators within Capital District Health Authority in the past.

Joan Falkenham is a part time research nurse currently providing support to Dr. Brock Vair and his Covidien mesh trial.

Devon Chafe is the Thoracic Surgery Study Coordinator and is currently working on a newly opened Lung Cancer clinical trial sponsored by GlaxoSmithKline to test the efficacy of a lung cancer vaccine as an adjuvant treatment. 50 patients are expected to be enrolled into this study at this site and it is being run in conjunction with several different departments, such as Pathology, Pharmacy, Medical Imaging and the Surgery Clinic. This study comes after the closure of a National Cancer Institute of Canada Clinical Trials Group (NCIC CTG) trial investigating the post op administration of Selenium for stage 1 Non-Small Cell

Lung Cancer patients. Future projects will include another partnership with the NCIC CTG comparing lobar versus sublobar resection of small peripheral lung cancers and a trial run with the Ottawa Hospital to investigate adjuvant Melatonin treatment for lung cancer patients undergoing surgical resections.

More information on the office and services can be found at <http://generalsurgery.medicine.dal.ca/research.htm>

Clinical Investigator Program Update

We are proud that at the end of this academic year, Dal Surgery will have 5 residents defending their Master's in a graduate program at Dalhousie:

Dr. Devon Richardson, will defend her MSc in Community Health and Epidemiology, "Outcomes and Quality of Rectal Cancer in Nova Scotia."

Dr. Matt Smith, is completing his MSc in Microbiology and Immunology with his project, "Molecular Basis of Anticancer Activity by the Flavoid Fisetin."

Dr. Lindsay McDonald's MSc in Medical Sciences, "The Role of HACE1 Tumour Suppressor in Normal Development and Tumourigenesis" will be defended in the Spring of 2011.

Dr. Christine Herman continues her MSc in Clinical Epidemiology with her project, "Reducing Adverse Cardiac Events in Cardiac Surgery: The PREEVENT Initiative."

Dr. Scott Livingstone is preparing to defend his MSc thesis in Immunology with his project, "Optimizing Steatotic Livers for Transplantation using Cell Penetrating Peptide Delivered Gene Therapy."

Dates for defence will be posted by the Dal Surgery Research Office.

The Dal Surgery Research Committee successfully approved the applications of three new resident researchers to compete for the Clinical Investigator Program starting in July 2011.

New Faculty ~ Dr. Adrian Park



DR. ADRIAN PARK will be coming to Halifax in March, 2011 to take up the reigns of Head of the Department of Surgery.

Dr. Park is a graduate from the University of Guelph, and obtained his medical degree from McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. Dr. Park continued his training as an Intern, Resident and Chief Resident at McMaster University in the Division of General Surgery. He completed a Fellowship in Laparoscopic/Endoscopic Surgery at the Hotel Dieu de Montreal.

Dr. Park comes to Dalhousie from the University of Maryland in Baltimore where he has spent the last four years as Vice-Chair of the Department of Surgery and the last seven years as Professor and Head in the Division of General Surgery. He is also an Adjunct Professor in Bioengineering and the Medical Director of the Aero Digestive

Centre at the University of Maryland.

Dr. Park is an internationally-known leader in laparoscopic surgery, and is the senior author of over 50 publications. We welcome Dr. Park, his wife Jennifer, and their family to Halifax!

New Faculty ~ Dr. Paul Hong

DR. PAUL HONG grew up in Southwestern Ontario. He completed his undergraduate degree in Honours Chemistry/Biochemistry at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario, where he received a National Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) research scholarship. He is a graduate of the University of Ottawa Medical School.

Dr. Hong completed his Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery residency at Dalhousie University, followed by a Fellowship in Pediatric Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at the University of California, San Diego.

Dr. Hong's clinical and research interests include pediatric outer ear reconstruction, external auditory canal and middle ear surgery, and congenital and acquired hearing loss. Dr. Hong has begun collaborative surgical endeavors and research projects with surgeons and scientists from Pediatric Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery and Biomedical Engineering at Dalhousie University.

His other interests include volunteering on international medical missions with non-governmental organizations, such as Smile China, Children of the Nations, and CanHEAR Uganda.

Dr. Hong is excited to be back in Nova Scotia with friends and colleagues, and we welcome him to the Dal Surgery Community!



Life Sciences Research Institute



THE EXCITEMENT IS BUILDING in Halifax as the countdown to Spring 2011 approaches. That which was only a vision a few short years ago will soon manifest at the corner of Summer and College Streets as a hub for scientific medical discovery. Daily progress is palpable and the myriad of activity heralds the soon-to-be completed LSRI.

In March 2010, Dr. Ivar Mendez, Chairman of the Brain Repair Centre, the anchor tenant of the new Life Science Research Institute, was inspired to give a presentation to the over 75 construction workers and staff on the building project. Mendez felt that it was important to give individuals, who are putting their time and effort into the building, a concept of how this structure will be utilized for the discovery of new cures for disease.

The presentation was welcomed as it is unusual for a construction crew to be informed of the function of a building. “The doctor gave a presentation that was unbelievable”, stated Leonard LeBlanc, a union sheet metal worker on the project. “They help people... give them a whole new life, people who can’t walk, talk... changes their lives, you know”.

The Life Sciences Research Institute will provide research and incubator space for the Halifax region’s growing life sciences and biotechnology sectors boosting the economic growth of the Atlantic Provinces by attracting new business, a highly skilled scientific workforce and new investment. The ultimate aim is to improve the quality of health of Nova Scotians, Atlantic Canadians and those beyond our own provinces.

In addition to Industry Canada funding, the Province of Nova Scotia, ACOA and the Canada Foundation for Innovation have supported the LSRI’s capital costs. Financial commitments have also been made by a number of very generous private benefactors, including Dalhousie Medical Research Foundation and Harrison McCain Foundation.

Joann Tusia

Kudos to our General Surgery Residents!

Congratulations to the following Residents for their success at CAGS (Canadian Association of General Surgery):

Dr. Jon Bailey, PGY2, won the National Laparoscopic Suturing Contest.

Dr. Rene Boisvert, PGY6, was awarded a prize for the highest CAGS mark for for PGY5’s and PGY6’s across the country. He had the highest CAGS mark of all residents.

Dr. Peter Nicholson, PGY2 was awarded the Dr. Stevens Norvell Prize for the second highest CAGS mar for all PGY1’s across the country.

Dr. Devon Richardson, PGY3 received the CSCRS/Genzyme Biosurgery Canada Award for “Best Paper” Podium Prize.

Faculty Profile ~ Dr. David Kirkpatrick

submitted by Dr. Manohar Bance

DR. KIRKPATRICK COMES FROM A LONG LINE of Otolaryngologists in the Halifax region. His grandfather was also an Otolaryngologist in the



Dr. Kirkpatrick with his wife, Paula on the peak of Mount Kilimanjaro

Halifax area, and Dr. Kirkpatrick is able to transfer this sense of belonging and stability to all who have contact with him. He is truly a nurturing individual.

Dr. Kirkpatrick trained at Dalhousie, and also did his Otolaryngology-Head and Neck surgery residency also at Dalhousie.

He then undertook a Fellowship at the University of Toronto in Otology and Sinus surgery.

Dr. Kirkpatrick was Head of Otolaryngology –Head and Neck Surgery for over 10 years, first when it was a Department, and later when it became a Division of Surgery. During this time, he was instrumental in building this Division, actively recruiting almost the entire current Faculty. This includes Drs. Bance, Trites, Taylor, Morris, Corsten, Johnson, Brown and recently Hong. His great success at this stems from his sense of trustworthiness. He is unfailingly kind, honest, sincere and altruistic; Faculty are attracted to these qualities in a head, and wish to work in this kind of atmosphere. He has a strong sense of ethical practice, doing what's best for not just the patient, but the region, and academic responsibility. He has been a great champion of the academic tertiary care centre model that exists at Capital Health, and of enhancing this vision even further.



Dr. Kirkpatrick (right centre) with fellow Haligonians at Mount Kilimanjaro.

In his time as head, Dr. Kirkpatrick oversaw the transformation of the Division into a research powerhouse. He actively supported many research enterprises, found money to seed them and was a great champion for clinician-researchers. He also built an atmosphere of great trust and collegiality in the Division, which has been one of its greatest strengths. All of this can be directly attributed to Dr. Kirkpatrick's leadership and example setting.

Dr. Kirkpatrick's patients are devoted to him, he is always the last to finish clinics and will spend as much time as is needed with any patient, and has the gift of listening. Similarly, residents love working with Dr. Kirkpatrick because of his nurturing and patience in the operating room.

Following his time as Head of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, Dr. Kirkpatrick became interim Head of the Department of Surgery for the last 18 months. During this tumultuous time, Dr. Kirkpatrick has been a strong guiding force and stabilizer. He has the trust of all players, and has been able to grow the sense of cohesion and collective purpose in the Department of Surgery enormously. At the same time, he has undertaken numerous other responsibilities within Capital Health, the Province and the Faculty of Medicine, including reviews of other Departments, provincial surgical organizations, and liaison with the Faculty of Medicine. His ability to get disparate interests to cooperate and work together knowing that they are dealing with someone who has only the greater good at heart has served the Department of Surgery very well. He is one of its greatest ambassadors.

As a person, Dr. Kirkpatrick is a true gentleman, he speaks ill of no-one, is very giving and extremely unselfish, and always seems to do the honourable thing.

The Department of Surgery has truly been lucky to have such a member amongst its ranks, and indeed recently leading it.