

ResearchNews

Happy Birthday!



From left to right: Research Awareness Week, poster awards; Research Networking Dinner; Continence Centre receives money from Pfizer; Brain Research Centre opening; Prostate Centre team.

The Vancouver Coastal Research Institute (VCHRI) is one year old! Created in June 2003 by Vancouver Coastal Health, VCHRI is Canada's newest hospital affiliated research institute. In partnership with UBC, we serve as the public face of research, supporting and promoting the development of investigators and research activity across the health authority.

VCHRI has spent the last year working to foster a greater culture of research and advance investigators and the important work you do. With your help, our milestones include:

- Membership in the Council for Health Research in Canada (CHRC).
- The establishment of a Trust to receive royalty and equity revenue from technology transfer.
- The development of an Intellectual Property Policy agreement for all researchers throughout VCHRI who do not hold academic appointments at UBC or any other VCH-affiliated academic institution.
- Augmenting central services to include a communications officer and business development manager.
- Enhanced Research Education Program with over 75 workshops as well as in-services provided to professional practice and/or resident groups such as OTs or Critical Care residents.
- The first *in it for life* Investigator Awards for Senior Scientists, Scholars and Mentored Clinician Scientists.
- Interdisciplinary Grant competition targeting investigators with new projects who wish to obtain pilot data, essential for preparation of a competitive proposal at the national funding level.
- The first research networking dinner, bringing together over 75 of the Institute's investigators to network, hear from fellow investigators, and connect with members of the Vancouver Coastal Health senior team.
- The launch of the Brain Research Centre and the Mood Disorders Centre.
- Research Awareness Week public forum in partnership with St. Paul's and BC Children & Women's hospitals.
- Numerous Awards & Accolades for VCHRI investigators and their research programs! (See back page for the most recent announcements.)

Future Directions

A dynamic second year for VCHRI is shaping up as we continue to work to enhance the profile of the Research Institute.

Our strategic direction includes:

- Infrastructure: with our success at CFI,
- Forming HSDA Research Advisory Committees to advise the HSDA COOs on strategic research objects in their areas and plans for achieving them.
- Developing a new blueprint for action for the next 5 years. An important goal within the revised plan will be

190K square feet of new space will be built at the VGH site over the next 4 years. Planning for this space is underway and work will begin in the coming year.

action steps to increase our competitiveness at CIHR and other national granting agencies.

I extend my heartiest congratulations to all investigators and staff on a very successful year. We look forward to continuing to pursue our vision of "Healthier Lives through Discovery" with a dynamic research culture.

Bernie Bressler, Director, VCHRI
Vice President Research,
Vancouver Coastal Health

Around the VCHRI



Data Use Agreements – Money in Your Research Bank

After scanning the headlines of the technology or business section of a newspaper, you often get the impression that significant patent protection is required before any business will show interest in research. For some deals this is certainly the case, but significant value is generated from the numerous deals that involve aspects of technology that are not patented. Take for example, the data that you have generated from your experiments. In investigator initiated studies researchers are eager to obtain funding and materials to conduct the trial, but fail to realize that the value of the data they are generating far exceed the company contributions to their research. In cases such as this, Data Use Agreements are often crafted by the University Industry Liaison Office (UILO), which allow the company to use the data for regulatory and patent filings, and in return a fee is paid. **As per UBC**

policies and an Affiliation Agreement with VCHRI, half of the fees go to support the two institutions, while the other half is allocated to the researcher, who may choose to use the funds for future research. Data Use Agreements are also important assets for companies who are interested in your basic research findings and wish to view them in advance of your publications or conference proceedings. Remember, **your research is valuable**, and we are always willing to explore ways of maximizing its potential. Please feel free to contact myself or my colleagues at the UILO to discuss this, and any other aspect of technology transfer.

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Clin Epi Gets New Coordinator

Manpreet Dhillon has been hired as the new Coordinator for Centre for Clinical Epidemiology and Evaluation. Her primary responsibilities include managing and coordinating the consulting services, marketing for the centre, as well as coordinating the administrative functions of the centre. Manpreet's background includes the Department of Computer Science (UBC) as well as BC Ferries and BC Hydro. Please feel free to contact her at mandhill@vanhosp.bc.ca or 604-875-4111 ext.62187 for any consultation requests you may have or any other comments and concerns.



Important changes to the UBC library catalogue

If you are a user of the UBC library, you may have already noticed the new e-catalogue that was introduced in May. You can access the catalogue by going to the UBC library (www.library.ubc.ca) and clicking on "catalogue" on the blue navigation bar at the top of the page.

One of the main changes that this new system offers is the ability to search the catalogue based on keywords, similar to the way a Google search is done. Although this is a useful tool, remember that you are searching only the UBC library catalogue, not a database like MedLine. The main input line can be used to search for any kind of material by author, title or subject heading; if you are looking for a journal, use the journal/e-journal input line further down on the page. As before, you must use the complete journal name (no abbreviations) for this search.

Another important change to the system is the password system. Previously, the last 4 digits of your library card barcode served as your password. The new system uses the last 5 digits. If you personalized your password, it has been reset to the 5 digits; you can change it again if you wish.

You can find instructions for using the new system by scrolling down on the main page. Use the tabs at the top of the page to move from one page to another instead of your browser's 'back' button to navigate through the site. Finally, if you have difficulty finding what you need, you can participate in a workshop (Electronic library resources) or ask a librarian at your site for help. Contact information for librarians is available on the web <http://www.vchri.ca/s/Framework-LiteratureSearch.asp#Librarian>.

Fear of Falling After Stroke

Dr. Bill Miller, professor of rehab sciences at UBC and VCHRI investigator (physical medicine and rehabilitation) says stroke is the number one cause of neurological disability in Canada today. It can result in decreased leg strength, poor balance and walking ability. As a result there is an increased risk of falling among people who have had a stroke. In recent studies, fear of falling has been reported to be of considerable personal concern because individuals tend to avoid participating in daily and social activities, which in turn can lead to deteriorating health, increased disability and reduced quality of life. Preliminary evidence suggests that fear of falling may be a problem in the stroke population but these studies are not conclusive and provide no information about individuals who have recently had a stroke.

Dr. Miller has received grant support over three years from the Heart and Stroke Foundation to determine if fear of falling is greater among individuals who have recently had a stroke compared to healthy individuals of similar age and gender. The study will follow a group of individuals who have recently had a stroke and a group of healthy individuals, who are of similar age and gender, for a 12-month period. Subjects who: have been diagnosed as having had their first stroke, have impaired walking ability related to their stroke, no other serious illnesses (i.e. rheumatoid arthritis), are older than 50, have minimal cognitive impairment and limited difficulty communicating will be recruited. Multiple measurements of fear of falling, fall incidence, walking, balance, participation in daily and social activities, and other important factors will be taken at four points in time

(close to discharge, 3, 6 and 12 months post discharge) after their initial induction into the study.

The project will be the first study to follow individuals forward in time while capturing information not only about fear of falling but also other information like incidence of falling, balance ability and mobility that might be important to the stroke – fear of falling relationship at multiple time points over the first year post stroke. Dr. Miller says, “By doing this, we will be able to describe the natural history or trends in fear of falling after impairment in a way no other published study has done. This information will provide us with insight about whether this condition warrants attention by rehabilitation professionals or not and may gain insight about when during the first year post stroke treatment should be offered.”

Announcing the 2004 VGH and UBC Hospital Foundation *in it for life* Investigator Awards Competition

Got ideas, but no time to pursue them? The *in it for life* Investigator Awards Competition can help! This year the sole category in our investigator awards is the **Mentored Clinical Scientist**. The awards are for \$50,000 per year for two years, renewable for one additional year. Salary support will be provided for clinicians to reduce their clinical practice commitments in order to develop their research careers as independent investigators.

This competition is designed to promote excellence and build health research capacity through peer-reviewed personnel awards to researchers located at VGH or UBC Hospital.

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Their primary clinical appointment must be at VGH or UBC hospital
- They have been nominated by their Department Head or Practice Leader, who must confirm departmental commitment to a research career for the individual
- They have a research mentor who agrees to participate fully in the program
- They will commit at least 25% of their time to research
- They hold either an M.D with a formal research training component as part of a fellowship or residency, or a graduate level health professional degree with a formal research training component



**Application deadline:
4pm on October 1, 2004**

Guidelines and application forms are available on the VCHRI website at www.vchri.ca/s/Internal_Grants.asp.

For information contact Patricia Tait, Coordinator, Grants & Education by email patait@vanhosp.bc.ca or phone 604-875-4111 x66782

Research Awards and Accolades

Success at the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research for VCHRI Investigators!

The 2004 MSFHR Trainee Awards were announced on March 26, 2004. There were eleven successful trainees from across VCHRI, including three junior graduate scholarships, three senior graduate scholarships and three post-doctoral fellowships. Of these, 4 awards were jointly funded with the VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation.

On May 13, 2004 the 2004 Investigator Award winners were announced. Congratulations go out to **Carlo Marra**, **Weihong Song**, **Lori Brotto**, **Erin Michalak**, and **Najib Ayas** who were successful in the scholar awards category; and **Ann Craig**, **Chong Lee** and **Jason Barton** who were successful as senior scholars.

Special Congratulations to the following:

Dr. Chong Lee has received a special five-year Senior Scholar award funded by the Patrick and Dulcie Lenox Endowment and the James A. and Donna-Mae Moore Endowment (administered by Vancouver Foundation). This special award, given for the first time this year, is for a clinical or biomedical researcher working in the area of Parkinson's Disease and related neurodegenerative and movement disorders in adults.



A special congratulations goes out to **Dr. Mark Fitzgerald**, Division of Respiratory Medicine and Director of the Centre for Clinical Epidemiology and Evaluation, who was awarded a Distinguished Scholar Award. This is a five-year, renewable award that is awarded to internationally recognized scientific leaders in their fields of study. The project is titled "Bringing evidence to patient."

Mark Fitzgerald and **Carlo Marra** are a part of the research team for the Respiratory Sleep Disorders Research Unit headed by **John Fleetham**. VCHRI received three awards in the Research Unit Infrastructure funding category.

- **Genetic Pathology Evaluation Centres (David Huntsman and team): Validation of prognostic and predictive cancer biomarkers (VCHRI and BC Cancer Agency).**
- **Respiratory Sleep Disorders Research Unit (John Fleetham and team).**
- **PC-TRIADD: The Prostate Centre's Translational Research Initiative for Accelerated Discovery and Development Functional Genomics (Martin Gleave and team)**

For more details please go to our website at www.vchri.ca

Heart and Stroke and Peter Wall Institute

Congratulations to **Dr Bill Miller** who received a three year grant from the Heart and Stroke Foundation to study stroke and the fear of falling relationship (see page 3) and to **Dr. Boris Sobolev** from the Clinical Epidemiology and Evaluation program for his infrastructure award from The UBC Early Career Scholar and Faculty Associate appointment with the UBC Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies at the Associate Professor level (2004).

CFI Support

As almost everyone around the institute surely must know, two research programs at VCHRI were successful in their CFI bids, which we were notified of in late March. Congratulations to **Martin Gleave and the Prostate Centre**, who were awarded \$8m for the for PC-TRIADD project and **Tom Oxland and the musculoskeletal group** who received \$5m for the creation of the new centre for Hip Health. These awards will significantly change the face of research at VCHRI. Watch for more information in the coming months.



Genome Canada: Applied-Health Genomics Research Awards.

"*Better Biomarkers of Acute and Chronic Allograft Rejection*" has received \$9.1 million in support from Genome Canada. This important research project aims to reduce transplant organ rejection through the power of genomics. It one of 15 national projects to be funded by the Applied Genomics and Proteomics Research in Human Health Competition. Congratulations to the three project leaders (**Paul Keown**, Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute (VGH Site); **Robert McMaster**, Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute (VGH Site), and **Bruce McManus**, St. Paul's Hospital).

Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute

Healthier lives through discovery



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Workshops and Presentations

The Research Education Program is taking a break over the summer, but watch the website in August for information on fall workshops.