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Abstract Deadline: August 22



November 24-26



**CITAC-ACCFC
AGM 2014, Toronto**

***Career Pathways for
Clinician Investigator
Trainees***

*Kevin Wang
University of Toronto
VP Internal, CITAC-ACCFC*

The Annual General Meeting of the Clinical Investigator Trainee Association of Canada – Association

des cliniciens-chercheurs en formation du Canada (CITAC – ACCFC) and the Canadian Society of Clinician Investigators (CSCI) will take place from November 24-26 in Toronto, Ontario. This marks the first time this meeting will be held in Toronto. On behalf of CITAC, I would like to warmly welcome all of our Canadian colleagues to Toronto. This promises to be an informative and educational meeting.

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**With Momentum,
Carrying On**

*Ju-Yoon Yoon
University of Manitoba
President, CITAC-ACCFC*

A few months ago, CITAC/ACCFC published a paper, detailing the results from the survey of Canadian CI trainees

(Yoon *et al.*, 2013, *Clin. Invest. Med.*). According to the data, the overall level of satisfaction is quite high, but there was certainly room to improve, especially when it comes to mentorship. CITAC/ACCFC thus identified what CI trainees *want*.

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CITAC AGM, 2014
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The theme for this year's conference is Career Pathways for Clinician Investigator Trainees. There will be a focus on the different pathways that a CI training program leads. Various established clinician scientists from academic, industry will be present to answer your questions.

As in previous years, there will be an opportunity to submit an abstract for the Young Investigator's Forum. All accepted abstracts will be published in a future issue of Clinical Investigative Medicine. The deadline for the abstract submission is **August 22, 2014**.

REGISTER TODAY!

Confirmed speakers for the AGM:

- Chaim Bell
(University of Toronto)
- Shurjeel Choudhri
(Bayer Healthcare)
- Ken Croitoru
(University of Toronto)
- Astrid Guttman
(University of Toronto)
- Prabhat Jha
(University of Toronto)
- Sheila Singh
(McMaster University)

Photo courtesy of Wikipedia



Mentorship Initiatives and Video Series - CITAC Mentorship Seed Funding Grant

*Enoch Ng
University of
Toronto*

Since the first CITAC-ACCFC annual general meeting in 2007, clinician investigator (CI) trainees have identified mentorship as one of their greatest areas of needs. This need was highlighted again in a 2009 national survey of CI trainees. 90% of respondents saw mentorship as crucial to their success and 62% expressed some level of dissatisfaction with the mentorship they were receiving (Yoon et al, 2013).

Accordingly, CITAC-ACCFC is promoting mentorship through three new initiatives. First, at the level of policy and advocacy, CITAC-ACCFC has been conducting a literature review that

includes: the benefits of mentorship, qualities of good mentorship relationships, and ways institutions can cultivate a culture of mentorship. This review, which will include a list of actionable recommendations, will be distributed to CI training programs across Canada.

Second, at the institution level, CITAC-ACCFC is providing funding (up to \$1,000, to be matched by the local institution) for the launch of local institutional mentorship events. Events could include but are not limited to symposia geared toward CI trainees, mentorship dinners and workshops. Instructions to apply for this funding have been sent to program directors across the country. Please contact us at citac@citac-accfc.org for more details.

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CITAC
AGGFC

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Finally, at the level of empowering individual CI trainees to get the mentorship they need, we are creating a four-part online video series together with associated web toolkits.

Topics will include: 1) defining mentorship and its difference from research supervision, 2) being ready for mentorship opportunities by first knowing ourselves, 3) how to find a mentor, and 4) starting off the mentorship relationship right.

The first of these videos (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZrHefU35qs>) is ready and the rest are coming soon. Links to these mentorship resources and more can be found by signing into the CITAC-ACCFC webpage (<http://www.citac-accfc.org/>).

Through publishing on and advocating for the importance of mentorship, providing seed money for local mentorship initiatives,

and creating online educational resources, CITAC-ACCFC will continue to help CI trainees find the mentorship they need.



University of Toronto MD/PhD Mentorship Symposium 2

*Brian Ballios & Gord McSheffrey,
University of Toronto*

A recent survey of MD/PhD students and alumni, as well as Clinician Investigator Program (CIP) trainees at the University of Toronto as part of the Task Force on Physician Scientist Education revealed that more than 91% of respondents felt that mentorship played a significant role in their training. Conversely, they felt that a lack of mentorship was a factor for those choosing to withdraw from medical research as a

component of their career/practice. In response, student leaders in the University of Toronto MD/PhD Program made expansion of mentorship initiatives a priority, to foster ongoing support of current trainees and develop opportunities to increase retention of these trainees in careers in research.

The MMS is a single event designed to provide trainees (MD students, MD/PhD students and resident physicians) with opportunities to learn about the life of a physician scientist and meet potential mentors that can help further their career goals. The inaugural MMS was held in April

2012 to great success. Attendance was estimated at 75 students in the MD and MD/PhD programs. Student and faculty feedback was exceedingly positive.

The MMS2 represents the continuation of this novel initiative to bring together established clinician scientists and trainees to build partnerships, foster collaborations for personal and professional development, and generate an atmosphere of mutual support and enrichment. Faculty members will lead small group, roundtable discussions covering several important topics. (Continued on page 4)



With Momentum, Carrying On

(Continued from Page 1)

In identifying what we need (*vs.* what we want), however, we need to first identify some outcome, ideally a measurable outcome. CITAC/ACCFC is a body of researchers. I thus believe in identifying and addressing the needs of the Clinician-Investigator (CI) trainees in a scientific and systematic manner. Is that possible with the present infrastructure? No, we do not have the data needed. How many of us enter academia, and how many of us are able to continue our research productivity as a faculty member? What do we, the Canadian CI trainees, especially those who do not pursue a research-focused career, gain from our added training? We do not know, because *nobody* knows. In the US, a study has examined the proportion of CI trainees entering academia (Brass *et al.*, 2010. *Acad. Med.*). We believe a similar study with better coverage of the trainee population can be done in Canada. The Canadian CI population size is much smaller compared to the American counterpart, and this can be an advantage when it comes to examining ourselves in a comprehensive manner.

2013-2014 has been an exciting year for CITAC/ACCFC thus far. Earlier, there was the launch of the first phase of the CITAC/ACCFC's longitudinal study of the Canadian CI trainees. We have begun with small steps—recruiting CI trainees from across the country to join CITAC/ACCFC, recruiting all members to our longitudinal study. With a number of concurrent projects aimed to boost our membership, we hope to

strengthen our database, with the goal of comprehensive coverage of the Canadian CI population. This project certainly looks to be a long-term endeavour, and it will be exciting to see what CITAC/ACCFC can produce in the next few years.

CITAC/ACCFC also strives to *translate* the knowledge gained through our research. Having learned the importance of mentorship with respect to the CI trainee satisfaction, we look to open doors for more mentorship opportunities for CI trainees across the country. Recently, CITAC/ACCFC has agreed to sponsor the MD/PhD Mentorship Symposium, held at the University of Toronto. Expanding on this initiative, CITAC/ACCFC is now looking to work with other program directors to facilitate the organization of local mentorship events at other institutions.

The CSCI/CITAC joint annual general meeting (AGM) is another event where we also look to provide mentorship opportunities, and the 2014 AGM looks to be an exciting event. From our survey of the participants from the 2013 AGM, it was voiced that a change in the venue was needed. Having heard these concerns, CITAC/ACCFC and CSCI have worked together to re-locate the meeting to Toronto. The 2014 AGM will be held at the Chestnut Conference Centre on November 24-26th, 2014, and this meeting looks to be the biggest AGM yet. The AGM looks to be not just a great scientific meeting, but also a great career development and mentoring as well.

CITAC/ACCFC remains a relatively young organization. Like other young organizations, as CITAC/ACCFC continues to grow, we look to better understand

ourselves, so that we may better understand the needs of constituents and how we may strengthen our growth. Recently, CITAC/ACCFC was represented at Academic Health Sciences Network (AHSN) symposium, where we were posed the question “Are we at risk of becoming an endangered species?” To this, we answered “No”. We are continuing to grow, and asking the important questions in health-related research, aiming, ultimately, to improve the well-being of our patients.



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Using input from the student body, past topics have included navigating the dual landscape of medicine and research, family-career balance, maintaining academic productivity through residency, etc. There will be several speakers from different stages of training, i.e., a resident physician engaged in a Clinician Investigator Program, a physician completing a clinical fellowship and an established clinician scientist. The speakers will give 20-30 minute talks around their stage of training, sharing practical insights on how to have a successful career as a clinician

scientist. This year, attendance is estimated at 100 trainees, 20 mentors and 5-10 speakers and other guests.

The MMS2 will also act as the capstone of the 2013-14 launch of the MD/PhD Longitudinal Mentorship Program (LMP). Established in June 2013, the LMP will constitute an ongoing annual program designed to connect students with alumni and established physician scientists. Mentors can provide advice on career choices, professional development and opportunities. Students are encouraged to set goals and met regularly with their mentors to establish a lasting

connection. The MMS2 is an opportunity for all mentors/mentees to gather and reflect on the progress over the last year.

This year's MMS2 is being held on **Monday, April 21st, 2014** at the Faculty Club, University of Toronto

For more information or questions about MMS2, please contact the event Chair:

Gordon McSheffrey
gord.mcsheffrey@mail.utoronto.ca

CaRMS 2014 – Looking Back

*Ju-Yoon Yoon
University of Manitoba
President, CITAC-ACCFC*

“You have a PhD. What more do you want?” A rhetorical question. It was definitely the most memorable question from my CaRMS tour. Selection committee members generally liked the fact that I am an MD/PhD trainee. That was expected. What I did not expect was the rather conspicuously large range in the level of enthusiasm with which the different programs view a candidate's desire for research productivity during the residency.

As an MD/PhD candidate, we are blessed with the gift of time that allows us to bolster our CV to a much greater degree compared to other undergraduate MD trainees. Used wisely, we are able to obtain strong reference letters, produce a lengthy CV and be granted more interviews than other candidates. Play your cards right, practice for your interviews, and we can considerably strengthen our probability of obtaining that

desired residency spot. It certainly is a great advantage, and this may be a driving factor behind the rising popularity of MD+ programs in the US.

For many of us Canadian trainees, however, simply attaining that desired residency spot is not the sole reason why we pursued our programs. For many of us, the residency is yet another means to a much larger goal, often striving for a career in academia, with a strong research component. Yes, according to the Royal College, “scholarly activities” are now a requirement during residency. Would that “scholarly activity” be sufficient for us to garner the momentum needed to attain a faculty position? Maybe. For me, it is expected that I be required to pursue fellowships in order to broaden my clinical training, as well as to produce publications that would allow me to negotiate a research-focused job contract.

So, what *more* do I want from a residency program? I want to be in a program where I can receive strong clinical training, as well as opportunities to continue my

research productivity. Kindling one's enthusiasm for research during the MD/PhD training, only to be forced to obliterate the fire seems like a counter-productive initiative. The flame must be controlled during those years in residency, yes, but a slow fire can cook up a delicious dish too—we just have to let the pot simmer for a while.

I look forward to my next five years. Without a doubt, the five years shall be some of the most challenging years in my life thus far. I understand that I simply augment the difficulty by actively choosing to maximize my research productivity, while not compromising the clinical training. After years of being engaged in research, however, I feel that my love for research is a large part of my own identity, and I have little interest in forfeiting my own identity, despite the difficult challenges ahead.

CITAC Funding Shortfalls

*Mehrnoosh Aghaei
University of
Calgary*

The CITAC-ACCFC role is to allow the sharing of knowledge among MD+ and CIP trainees by removing barriers created by varying geography, stages of training, and institutional support. It is essential to note that clinical investigator trainees represent only a small minority in the MD and residency programs, the possibility of marginalization exists within the infrastructure of Canadian medical schools. This can lead to

reduced trainee satisfaction, increased drop-out rate, reduced propensity to continue in research and inadequate mentorship. Thus, it is crucial for institute such as CITAC-ACCFC to collectively represent the interests of these trainees and remove barriers by providing support and mentorship to enhance the quality of training. Currently, CITAC-ACCFC is the only structure that functions at the national level to ensure that the needs of CI trainees are being met. We are committed to improve the early-career conditions of MD/MSc, MD/PhD, and Royal College Clinician-Investigator Program (CIP) programs in order

to expand and advance innovative research initiatives within Canada. However, in order to fulfill these goals, operational and funding support becomes essential to oversee a range of promotional, research and mentorship activities, and to communicate effectively with its members across Canada. Currently CITAC is facing funding difficulty and possibly approaching an ending to receive support from large funding agencies such as CIHR Institute. We are looking into new avenues to fund our primary goal to represent our trainees and provide mentorship to enhance the quality of training.

Institute Reps Updates!

Western University (Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry) MD/PhD Program

Firstly, we would like to congratulate several of our upcoming graduates: Matthew Cecchini matched to Anatomical Pathology in London, Shirine Usmani matched to Internal Medicine in Toronto, Harry Marshall matched to Diagnostic Radiology in London and Pencilla Lang matched to Radiation Oncology in Toronto! We would also like to extend a welcome to our new program coordinator, Mariel Angus.

At Western, bi-monthly MD/PhD seminars serve as a forum for students to discuss their research. Invited speakers, typically clinician-scientists, are also invited to discuss their research and provide career advice to students within the program. Schulich also provides the Schulich Research Opportunities Program (SROP), Summer Research Training Program (SRTP), and Clinician Investigator

Program (CIP) for encouraging medical students, residents and fellows to pursue a research career. More information can be found at <http://www.schulich.uwo.ca/research/clinicalresearchtrainingprograms>.

University of Toronto (MD/PhD Program)

This past year has been an exciting year for the mudphuds at University of Toronto. We had an incoming class of 8 new students and 6 outgoing students who all matched to their first choice of residency. We wish them all the best in their clinical placements next year!

In addition to the monthly student seminars where trainees are able to present their research, U of T has also initiated a faculty seminar in conjunction with the student seminar. These faculty talks focus partly on their career path as well as their research interests. These have been well received by students from all years.

This year also saw the second installment of the MD/PhD

Mentorship Symposium, which was partly funded through CITAC. This event was very well attended and featured several new and established clinician scientists. This year will also see the continuation of the longitudinal mentorship program where students will be paired with established clinician scientists in an effort to strengthen the mentorship environment.

If you would like to submit an update for the next issue of the CITAC newsletter, please email your updates to the VP Internal, Kevin Wang
kevinxin.wang@gmail.com



Clinical and Investigative Medicine

Official journal of the Canadian Society for Clinical Investigation

The trainee section of the Clinical and Investigative Medicine journal is now actively soliciting articles. Please email our CIM trainee section editor Veronique Ram for submission inquiries:

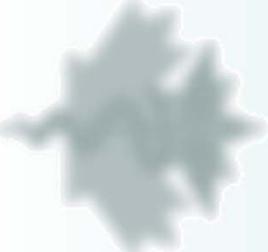
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