WELCOME BACK OPHTHALMOLOGY BBQ

Our annual Welcome Picnic took place September 18th, 2021, and was a delightful event. Thank you to Dr. Demco and all the PGY3s, Dr. Steven Bae, Dr. Dongho Lee & Dr. Cameron Oliver, for organizing a wonderfully welcoming and family-friendly event! While rain clouds loomed, the event enjoyed dry and, at times, sunny weather! More than 70 people RSVP’d and those who attended enjoyed boxed lunches, relaxed conversation, basketball, and bouncy castles (for the little ones).

Dr. Mary Lou Jackson and Dr. Gelareh Noureddin discussing what looks like important matters

A game of pick up turned into thoughtful conversations. Pictured here: Dr. Tuan Tran, Olga Arsovka, Dr. Zaid Mammo, and Dr. Joanne Matsubara

The weather held out so the kids could play!

Chats between colleagues! Pictured here: Dr. Jocelyn MacIntosh, Dr. Peter Dolman, and Dr. Jane Gardiner
**RESEARCH LAB UPDATES**

**Dr. Ipek Oruc**
- Dr. Oruc was awarded a DMCBH Innovation Fund Kickstart grant entitled “Automated detection of Alzheimer’s Disease from retinal fundus images using deep learning” together with colleagues Dr. Sonia Yeung, Dr. Ozgur Yilmaz and Dr. Robin Hsiung. Link to the announcement: [https://www.centreforbrainhealth.ca/news/2021/06/11/winners-2021-dmcbh-innovation-fundkickstart-research-grant-announced](https://www.centreforbrainhealth.ca/news/2021/06/11/winners-2021-dmcbh-innovation-fundkickstart-research-grant-announced)
- Dr. Oruc delivered a talk virtually at the Institute of Applied Mathematics Seminar entitled “A Vision Scientist’s Adventures in Image Recognition: The Biological, the Artificial and the In-Between”. Link to the abstract: [https://www.iam.ubc.ca/events/event/application-of-machine-learning-techniques-in-vision-science/](https://www.iam.ubc.ca/events/event/application-of-machine-learning-techniques-in-vision-science/)

**Dr. Miriam Spering**
- Dr. Spering is now on sabbatical (until June 2022) and currently visiting the Humboldt University in Berlin (Germany) to conduct a project on eye movements as sensitive indicators of human memory function (funded by a UBC Killam Fellowship and a Humboldt Foundation Fellowship for experienced researchers)
- Congrats to Eden Dubchak (Med Class of 2024) for his SSRP award and completion of research on Fuch’s Endothelial Dystrophy and Granzyme B with Drs. Joanne Matsubara and Sonia Yeung.
- Congrats to Katrina Schwab (Med Class of 2024) for her SSRP award and completion of research on Amyloid Beta and the Retinal Vasculature in the Alzheimer’s eye with Dr. Joanne Matsubara.
- Congrats to Manjosh Uppal on receiving 2021 Faculty of Medicine Graduate Student Award for his MSc studies with Dr. Joanne Matsubara.

**Dr. Orson Moritz**
- Congratulations and farewell to M.Sc. student Farhad Ghaseminijad on successfully defending his thesis titled: “Development of novel models and CRISPR-based gene editing therapeutics for retinal degeneration in Xenopus laevis”. Farhad started first year medical school at UBC this September.
- Congratulations and farewell to research assistant Ross Scharbach, who was admitted to the Software Systems Developer program at BCIT in September.

**RESEARCH GRANTS AWARDED**

**Dr. Myeong Jin Ju**
- SPARK 21 - “Advanced multi-functional in vivo retinal imaging for ocular oncology” (with Dr. Zaid Mammo)
- ASRP New Investigator Operating Grant - “Hyperspectral dynamic retinal imaging for Alzheimer’s Disease Pathophysiology”

**INCOMING STAFF AND STUDENTS**

**Dr. Myeong Jin Ju - New Grad Students**
- Jordan Johnson received his Bachelor’s degree in 2020 from Electrical Engineering at University of Victoria and is in the Biomedical Engineering Program at UBC.
- Jun Song received his Bachelor’s degree in 2019 from Mechatronic Systems Engineering at Simon Fraser University and is in the Biomedical Engineering Program at UBC.

**Dr. Joanne Matsubara - New Students**
- Welcome to Matt Campbell and Stephanie Spencer on joining the Matsubara Lab.

**Dr. Miriam Spering - New MSc Candidates**
- The Oculomotor Lab welcomes two new MSc candidates in Neuroscience: Juana Ayala (from Universidad de Los Andes, Colombia) and Leah Kuzmuk (from UBC).

**Dr. Orson Moritz - New Research Assistant**
- Welcome to new research assistant Cristina Novakovic, who has replaced Ross Scharbach.

**Dr. Debbie Giaschi - New Grad Students and New Junior Colleague**
- Akosua Asare - from Ghana is a PhD student in the Neuroscience graduate program, she won a UBC Four Year Doctoral Fellowship.
- Zahra Kheradmandaadi - from Iran is a PhD student in Psychology, she won a UBC Four Year Doctoral Fellowship.
- Alex Cook - from USA is a PhD student in Psychology, he won a UBC Four Year Doctoral Fellowship.
- Dr. Hee Yeon Im - from Harvard is an Assistant Professor in the UBC Department of Psychology who is collaborating on projects in the Ophthalmology Research Lab at BC Children’s Hospital.
Update on Fort St. John Clinic:

UBC Ophthalmology activities have returned to beyond pre-pandemic levels thanks to the efforts of the residents and all our visiting faculty. We have increased services in that we have a staff present during both weeks the resident is present. This has also allowed for an expansion of subspecialist visits and addition of neuro-ophthalmology. The hospital is tendering for replacement of the phaco machine and planning for 2 units so we have a back up.

The retina service has expanded to monthly visits since July 2020. Applications have been made for FA camera/nursing and photography staffing that Dr. Chui tabled in February 2020 when COVID started. The FSJ hospital foundation is reviewing its projects this year and we are hopeful that these applications will be funded.

Congratulations and thank you to all involved for being able to provide this high level of care in difficult times.

-Simon Holland, Claire Sheldon, David Fine, and Lica Chui

VPSA feature article on Ophthalmology highlighting the Rapid Access Clinic during the COVID-19 Pandemic:

Featuring Dr. Salina Teja, Dr. Zaid Mammo, and Dr. Vivian Yin
Read the full story [https://ourvancouvermsa.ca/2021/09/19/vpsa-funding-assists-development-of-a-site-for-sore-eyes/](https://ourvancouvermsa.ca/2021/09/19/vpsa-funding-assists-development-of-a-site-for-sore-eyes/)

DEPARTMENT WELLNESS

We are pleased to announce that Jacqui Moolenbeek is participating in the Workplace Wellbeing Ambassador Program (WWA). The WWA program is in partnership with Central HR-Health, Wellbeing and Benefits team in an effort to embed wellbeing and wellbeing practices within UBC workplaces.

As an Ambassador, she will be provided with tools to communicate upcoming wellbeing programs and initiatives and also access additional resources to help promote a healthier workplace.

We encourage everyone to take advantage of the health and wellbeing programs and services at UBC to support your personal wellbeing and foster a supportive and resilient workplace.
UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered their time to teach the undergraduate students of UBC. The top five teachers with the most hours since July 2021 are:

- Hugo Sutton
- Jane Gardiner
- Paul Mackenzie
- Christopher Lyons
- Conor Mulholland

A message from Jane Gardiner:
We have returned to the full week of Ophthalmology clerkship for the year 3 students, from the half a week during the height of the pandemic. As a result, we have an increased need for clerkship preceptors. Please contact Selina Lau at Selina.Lau@vch.ca if you can help out.

There is also an opportunity to teach Clinical Skills to our pre-clinical students. On September 23, October 14 and November 25th, we are looking for preceptors to do the small group (6 students) clinical skills teaching for the second year students. This was postponed from last year and we will have a double cohort to teach this year, with more requests coming later. It would be a morning, 4 hour session. It involves teaching the slit lamp and funduscopy. Would you consider taking one of the small groups, in your office for this session? If so, please contact Nick at clinical.skills@ubc.ca

If there is anyone looking for an opportunity to get CME credits and a little income, we are looking for MCQ question writers to add to our question bank for the undergraduate exam. If there is anyone interested, please contact me directly for more information.

If you are interested in connecting with students in other ways, in person shadowing is again allowed. Selina Lau needs to be involved with any student requests. There is also the virtual Career Planning Café attended by up to 8 students, discussing your work in an informal 45 minute session. A more longitudinal commitment would be the Mentor Program. I am happy to provide more information on these opportunities for those who might be interested.

In light of our ongoing challenges finding preceptors, at our recent UBC Faculty meetings, a motion was passed that faculty should aim for the equivalent of at least 12 half days of teaching a year. Thank you for your commitment to undergraduate medical education.

GAINED IN TRANSLATION

Saturday, October 30, 2021 from 8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

The Gained in Translation symposium is a meeting of clinical and vision scientists from:
University of Washington
The University of British Columbia
Oregon Health and Science University

Presentations focus on bridging the gap between disease treatment and the latest advances in translation and basic research. Clinical and research faculty, community colleagues, residents, fellows and students are welcome to attend.

Zoom invitation from the University of British Columbia will be forthcoming.

Contact: Jacqui Moolenbeek -- jacqui.moolenbeek@vch.ca

“LEARN CONTINUALLY. THERE’S ALWAYS ONE MORE THING TO LEARN.” - STEVE JOBS
RESIDENCY PROGRAM

The 2021 – 2022 Academic curriculum is underway with ongoing (largely virtual) sub-specialty clinical rounds and academic half-day. Thank you to each of the staff physicians and fellows participating in these core educational events. We would like to extend a warm welcome to Dr. Paula Blanco who will be joining the program as a core ophthalmic pathologist. She will be involved in teaching residents with a combination of one-on-one sessions & monthly rounds. Welcome to Dr. Blanco!

Dr. Paula Blanco obtained her medical degree from the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina, and subsequently pursued a Master of Science degree in the Department of Pathology at McGill University in Montreal. She completed her residency training in Anatomical Pathology in Barcelona, Spain, followed by clinical research fellowship subspecialty training in Renal and Transplantation Pathology with the Edmonton group at the University of Alberta, and post-doctoral studies in Ocular Pathology at McGill University. She is currently a Renal Pathologist and Ophthalmic Pathologist in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at UBC.

Over the past summer, the Residency Training Committee has continued to meet and work towards responding to our 2020 Accreditation concerns. The RTC worked to update and revise rotation- and stage-specific goals & objectives. With these, the RTC has moved on to updating and revamping residency In-Training Evaluation Reports (ITERS). These will replace the prior, outdated One45 forms. These steps form a significant portion of our response to Accreditation concerns – these include Area for Improvement (AFI) such as “Educational competencies and/or objectives are in place to ensure residents progressively meet all required standards for the discipline and address societal needs” and “there is a mechanism in place to engage residents in regular discussions for review of their performance and progression”. All documents are freely available on the program MS Teams site & are freely available on request. It is important that, as a program, these defined goals & objectives and evaluation forms are “live” documents. The program will be working with each section / rotation to enhance their use and to encourage ongoing, active, and engaged feedback from the residents. In fact, watch for upcoming Grand Rounds that discuss these updates and the topic of providing feedback.

Furthermore, as we address accreditation concerns, please consider the following timeline:

- UBC Internal Review - Spring 2022 (date TBD)
- Royal College External Review – March 2023 (date TBD)

In addition, as with other programs with our status, the PGME has recommended an external consultation by an ophthalmologist from outside UBC. Dr. Bernard Hurley will be filling that role and, to be clear, this is not a review per se but, rather, an opportunity to discuss successes and ongoing challenges, with all stakeholders, as well as obtain an external point of view. As many may know, Dr. Hurley is a retina specialist from the University of Ottawa and was Program Director there for a long period of time as well as chair of the Royal College Ophthalmology PD Committee. While the schedule has not been finalized, in late October & November, we are organizing a series of virtual meetings that have been built around already-scheduled staff meetings and will include conversations with residents, UBC, VGH and SPH colleagues. More information will be distributed shortly.

We look forward in the upcoming year and are exciting to continue to work with alongside each of you! As always, please consider our virtual doors open if there are any concerns.

With best wishes to all,

Claire Sheldon
Gelareh Noureddin
Nawaz Nathoo

Upcoming Resident Program & Departmental Events:
- October 29, 2021: Next UBC Faculty Meeting
- October 30, 2021: Gained in Translation
- November 5, 2021: Next RTC Meeting

New Pediatric Ophthalmologist starting in November 2021

Dr. Harald Gjerde did his residency training in Halifax and just completed his Pediatric Fellowship in Boston. He will be joining Dr. Cline’s Practice in Surrey.

Newsletter submissions: jacqui.moolenbeek@vch.ca