



UBC MD PhD

UBC MD/PhD Program
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Newsletter – 2020 Winter

<http://mdprogram.med.ubc.ca/mdphd/news/>

Student Research Forum & Open House

The 20th annual UBC MD/PhD Student Research Forum and Open House was held on Friday, 6 September 2019, 1:15-5:00 pm, at the Michael Smith Laboratories, UBC. **Dr. Torsten Nielsen**, Director of the MD/PhD Program, set off the exciting event. Special thanks go to our invited guest speaker, **Dr. Gordon Francis**, Professor, Department of Medicine, UBC, and Director of the Healthy Heart Program Prevention Clinic at UBC & St. Paul's Hospital. Prospective applicants had some excellent questions and got the opportunity to talk with the speakers and our current MD/PhD students. Thanks to **Daniel Kwon**, our student representative, for organizing the event.



Daniel Kwon, our student representative,
at the welcoming speech



Dr. Gordon Francis, our guest speaker.

- Student presentations:
Alvin Qiu, **Wissam Nassrallah** and **Mark Trinder** talked about their MD/PhD training experience at UBC.
- Poster presentations described some of the active research by our current MD/PhD students:
Katrina Besler, "The role of exogenous lysosomal acid lipase in enhancing cholesterol removal from arterial smooth muscle foam cells".
Rozlyn Boutin, "Bacterial-derived short-chain fatty acids inhibit the growth of an asthma-exacerbating yeast of the infant gut microbiota".
Daniel Kwon, "Evaluation of BL01 and BL02 as theranostic agents targeting C-X-C chemokine receptor 4".
Wissam Nassrallah, "Neuroprotective effect of Sigma-1 receptor on synaptic function & calcium handling in Huntington disease".
Alvin Qiu, "The SS18-SSX oncoprotein is directed by DNA methylation state to evict polycomb in primary synovial sarcomas".
Mark Trinder, "Cholesteryl ester transfer protein (CETP) genetics influence lipoprotein changes and outcomes in clinical sepsis".

MD/PhD Program Admissions & Advisory Committee 2019-2020

The MD/PhD Admissions/Advisory Committee consists of four ex-officio members and seven appointed members. Ex-officio members hold standing spots on the committee because of their primary positions: the Assistant Dean of MD Admissions, the Associate Dean of Graduate & Postgraduate Education, the MD/PhD Program Director and the MD/PhD Program Associate Director. Appointed members are composed of clinician-scientists, basic scientists, graduate program advisors, student research supervisors and one student representative. To ensure that the MD/PhD Committee may benefit from maximum faculty and program involvement, diverse ideas and a healthy turn-over rate, the appointed members' terms are for three years, renewable once. The full Committee meets at least twice a year to review the admissions process and to finalize the ranking of MD/PhD applicants, as well as to discuss program policy. Members of the Committee undertake admissions interviews, and also frequently serve on MD/PhD students' Thesis Research Supervisory, PhD Comprehensive Examination and PhD Final Oral Examination Committees.



Shahin Shirzad, MD

Assistant Dean, Admissions, Undergraduate Medical Education, Faculty of Medicine, UBC



Michael Hunt, PhD

Associate Dean, Graduate & Postgraduate Education, Faculty of Medicine, UBC



Torsten Nielsen, MD/PhD

Director, MD/PhD Program, UBC

Professor, Department of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine, UBC



Liam Brunham, MD/PhD (Alumnus, UBC MD/PhD Program)

Associate Director, MD/PhD Program, UBC

Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine, UBC

Principal Investigator, Centre for Heart and Lung Innovation, UBC & St. Paul's Hospital



Maureen Ashe, PhD

Associate Professor, Department of Family Practice, UBC

Canada Research Chair in Community Mobility



Shernaz Bamji, PhD

Professor, Department of Cellular & Physiological Sciences, UBC

Scholar, Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research



Julie Bettinger, PhD

Associate Professor, Department of Pediatrics, UBC

Scholar, Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research



Alice Mui, PhD

Associate Professor, Department of Surgery, UBC

MD Undergraduate Education, UBC



Millan Patel, MD

Clinical Professor, Department of Medical Genetics, UBC,

Investigator, BC Children's Hospital



Lynn Raymond, MD, PhD

Professor and Associate Head, Graduate & Undergraduate Medical Education, Department of Psychiatry, UBC

Louise A. Brown Chair in Neuroscience



Daniel Kwon

Year 4, MD/PhD Student, UBC

UBC MD/PhD PROGRAM

MD/PhD Student Representative – Daniel Kwon

Daniel Kwon, Year 4 student, is our 2019-2020 student representative, supported by alternate student representative **Wissam Nassrallah**, and **Rohit Singla**, our student representative at the Island Medical Program. The major responsibility of the student representative is to sit on the MD/PhD Admissions/Advisory Committee. Other duties include helping to organize the MD/PhD monthly student meetings/seminars, student socials, attending national MD/PhD meetings and presenting at student events to promote the MD/PhD Program. Prospective applicants are welcome to contact any of our students to ask questions. <http://mdprogram.med.ubc.ca/mdphd/students/>



Daniel Kwon

Message from Daniel:

I have the pleasure to be the 2019/2020 student representative for the MD/PhD Program at the University of British Columbia. The MD/PhD Program at UBC is one of Canada's premier programs, with the mission of training Canada's next generation of clinician scientists to advance findings in the biomedical and social sciences to directly impact clinical care in Canada and throughout the world. It has been my lifelong dream to become a clinician scientist and engage in translational research and I am especially happy to be promoting our program and the career of a clinician scientist through various events such as our annual Open House. I am also pleased to serve as part of the admissions committee this year to ensure that our pipeline of trainees will continue to exhibit the excellence that is in line with the mission and philosophy of the UBC MD/PhD Program.

I am especially pleased to be working alongside **Dr. Torsten Nielsen**, our Program Director, and **Dr. Liam Brunham**, our new Associate Program Director, who both work tirelessly to ensure that our students obtain the resources and support they need to be successful and competitive in their doctoral and medical studies and the next stages of their careers. I also want to thank **Dr. Lynn Raymond**, who has tirelessly served the program for 12 years as the Director and currently is still part of the MD/PhD Admissions and Advisory Committee. Finally, none of this would be possible without our Program Coordinator **Jane Lee**, who ensures that the program runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis.

As an introduction, I was born in Seoul, South Korea, but immigrated to Canada at a very young age with my family and have lived in Vancouver all of my life. Throughout my childhood and adolescent years, I have always maintained a steadfast interest in medicine and research, though I debated at times whether I was more interested in mathematics, chemistry or physics, leading me to pursue chemistry as my undergraduate major. During my undergraduate studies, I remember being greatly inspired in my third-year organic chemistry class, looking at the complex structures of various natural products that were now used as chemotherapeutics. Fueled by this, I embarked on a variety of research projects in synthetic organic chemistry, culminating in a MSc in Chemistry at Simon Fraser University with a focus on natural product synthesis. Throughout all this time, however, I had the desire to pivot back to medicine as a clinician scientist and integrate my knowledge of synthetic organic chemistry with clinical medicine to translate novel molecular therapeutics to target diseases that are in dire need of effective treatment options.

I had the fortune and privilege of being accepted in the program as a transfer student during Year 1 in the MD Program and immediately embarked on my doctoral research with **Dr. François Bénard**, who is a Professor at the Department of Radiology, a Distinguished Scientist in the Department of Molecular Oncology and currently the Senior Executive Director of Research at BC Cancer. Dr. Bénard is widely regarded as one of Canada's leading clinician scientists in the development of new radiopharmaceuticals for imaging and radiotherapy, and I was especially happy to work with him in leveraging my knowledge of synthetic chemistry in the development of novel radiopharmaceuticals. My doctoral thesis focuses on targeting elements in the

tumour microenvironment, which play key roles in cancer growth, chemoresistance, and metastasis. We are especially gratified to see that one of our radiopharmaceuticals targeting the C-X-C Chemokine Receptor 4 (CXCR4), a well-studied receptor that influences the tumour microenvironment and enables cancers to be highly aggressive and resistant to therapeutics, produces high quality images of CXCR4-expressing cancers. Currently, we are further optimizing our radiopharmaceuticals for radiotherapy to directly and selectively deliver destructive radiation to sites of metastasis in cancer patients that are highly refractory to treatment. We hope that translation of our radiopharmaceuticals to the clinic will result better diagnostics for cancer patients and pave the way for a new treatment route for patients with aggressive and/or late-stage cancers.

Through my four years in the program, I have had multiple opportunities to participate in various clinician investigator trainee meetings supported by the MD/PhD Program, including the 2018 and 2019 CITAC Annual General Meeting, the 2018 National MD/PhD Meeting in Colorado, and the Canadian Student Health Research Forum in Winnipeg, where I had the honour of receiving the Lindau Award and the nomination to attend the 70th Interdisciplinary Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting in 2020. This nomination also came with a generous invitation by the Gairdner Foundation to attend their annual award ceremony, where I had the amazing opportunity to interact with several Gairdner laureates, including **Dr. Connie Eaves** at BC Cancer who has mentored previous MD/PhD students in the past, and other eminent biomedical and clinician scientists. The program has consistently strived to encourage its trainees in attending these various meetings to network with clinician scientists in Canada and throughout the world and I am especially grateful for their support.

The best part about any graduate program are your classmates and peers and the MD/PhD Program is no different. I can always count on the support of **Wissam Nassrallah**, **Alvin Qiu** and **Mark Trinder**, who are not only some of the most hard-working and intelligent people I have met but also are always happy to participate in social activities, whether it be watching football on a Thursday or Sunday night or hiking in the various trails throughout Vancouver. For those interested in the career of a clinician scientist and pursuing it through the UBC MD/PhD Program, I can without doubt say that our program fosters a healthy and constructive atmosphere where lifelong relationships are made. I look forward to hopefully seeing you at the MD/PhD interviews and even as part of the incoming cohort of students this year.

Congratulations, Daniel, for successfully winning two Faculty of Medicine awards this winter term.
> Laurel L. Watters Research Fellowship in Medical Research. This fellowship is awarded for a deserving graduate student or medical resident engaged in research into the causes, treatment, and cure of breast cancer.
> Bertrand and Neila Galloway Leukemia Research Fund. This award is to support research into the causes of and cure for leukemia.

Recent publication: Lau J, **Kwon D**, et al. [⁶⁸Ga]Ga/[¹⁷⁷Lu]Lu-BL01, a Novel Theranostic Pair for Targeting C-X-C Chemokine Receptor 4. Mol Pharm. 2019 Nov 4;16(11):4688-4695. doi: 10.1021/acs.molpharmaceut.9b00808. Epub 2019 Oct 4. PMID: [31545614](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31545614/)



Daniel has organized multiple social events for our current and incoming students.

Meet Our Incoming Students – September 2019



**Katherine
Baillie**



**Dhiraj
Mannar**



**Maryam
Vaseghi-Shanjani**

**Welcome to the
Program!**

Katherine Baillie completed her BSc in Honours Biochemistry at UBC in 2019. She developed an interest in research doing a directed studies project under **Dr. Douglas Allan** investigating neurodevelopment in *Drosophila*. She also worked at the biotech company Innovative Targeting Solutions generating novel antibody therapeutics. For her honours thesis in **Dr. Eric Jan**'s lab, she studied the mechanism and function of the 2A peptide in Cricket Paralysis virus and developed a screening assay for potential anti-viral compounds. For her PhD, Katie is working with **Dr. Peter Stirling**. The Stirling Lab is investigating the role of genome instability in the development and progression of cancer, with a particular interest in R loop structures. Outside of research, Katie enjoys spending time in the outdoors hiking and kayaking, and scuba diving.

Dhiraj Mannar completed his BSc in Honours Biochemistry at UBC in 2019. During his co-op experience, Dhiraj worked on various research projects from the development and production of phosphorylation state specific antibody microarrays at Kinexus Bioinformatics Corporation to evaluating the neutralization capabilities of single chain fragment antibodies engineered against toxins secreted by the opportunistic pathogen *Clostridium Difficile*, under the supervision of **Dr. Ted Steiner**. For his honours thesis, Dhiraj worked in the lab of **Dr. Calvin Yip**, where he characterized the molecular assembly of Elongator, a 12 subunit protein complex responsible for tRNA modification. His thesis "Structural and Functional Characterization of Human Elongator" was awarded the Violet and Blythe Eagles undergraduate prize in biochemistry. For his PhD, Dhiraj will be working in **Dr. Sriram Subramaniam**'s lab where he will focus on utilizing cryo-electron microscopy (cryo-EM) to visualize molecules, viruses and cells with the central goal of accelerating the development of effective therapeutic agents to treat cancer, disorders of the brain and infectious diseases. Outside of research, Dhiraj is an avid musician and enjoys skateboarding.

Maryam Vaseghi-Shanjani completed her BSc in BioPsych and her MSc in Medical Sciences both at McMaster University. During the summer of her first year in undergrad, she received a grant from Parkinson's Foundation to conduct research at Toronto Western Hospital investigating the role of the subthalamic nucleus in response inhibition. In her second year of undergrad, she worked as a summer student at McMaster University, studying the impact of wastewater on the physiology and behavior of fish. In her 3rd and 4th year of undergrad, she worked as an undergraduate thesis student with **Dr. Zhou Xing** and continued her graduate studies in the same lab. During her master's, she used a murine model of virulent tuberculosis infection and BCG vaccination to understand the role of alveolar macrophages in host defense against pulmonary TB in previously immunized animals. The main focus of her research was to identify and characterize vaccine-induced memory alveolar macrophages. For her PhD, Maryam will be working in **Dr. Soren Gantt**'s lab which specializes in understanding the impact of cytomegalovirus (CMV) infections on the immunology of infants and mothers. Maryam plans to study the impact of primary CMV infections on the innate immune system and the possibility of primary infections to protect against subsequent infections via innate-immune mediated mechanisms. Outside of research, Maryam has spent a lot of time organizing and delivering workshops on viral transmission and vaccines to children living in underprivileged neighborhoods in Hamilton. Maryam hopes to continue her advocacy work in Vancouver as well. In her free time, Maryam enjoys learning, teaching and choreographing Iranian traditional and folkloric dances. She also loves learning new languages and currently speaks 4 languages fluently.

PhD Oral Defense

Cynthia Min successfully defended her thesis (on the topic of medical student examinations!) on 12 December 2019. Cynthia's research supervisors are **Drs. Kevin Eva** and **Daniel Pratt**, in Cross Faculty Inquiry in Education, Faculty of Education. Cynthia's dissertation was described by **Dr. Joan Sargent**, the external examiner, as "The thesis succeeds in two tasks which enable the work to have an impact on medical education and assessment approaches more broadly, and to the administration and use of OSCE's in particular." Congratulations!

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Cynthia Min: PhD thesis
**First-Year Medical Students' Perceptions of Objective Structured
Clinical Examinations' Contributions to Learning**

ABSTRACT



There is increasing interest in medical education in the use of assessments to enhance student learning. However, there remains limited understanding of the range of factors that influence student learning before, during, and after assessments. Current research has mainly focused on learning after an assessment and focused on providing feedback as a form of support. A Self-Regulated Learning perspective prompts consideration of a wider range of potential factors and suggests that students' personal objectives drive learning in educational tasks with students navigating the learning environment in ways they think will most help them work towards their objectives.

Using principles of Constructivist Grounded Theory, first-year medical students attending a Canadian university were interviewed about their experience learning through Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) that were presented by their training program as needing to be completed for formative (21 students) and summative (15 students) purposes. Each OSCE consisted of a series of brief simulated patient encounters.

This research demonstrated that students' learning through OSCEs was a complex process influenced by interactions between factors related to the student, assessment design and the broader environment.

PhD Comprehensive Exams

Congratulations to **Wissam Nassrallah** and **Alvin Qiu** who passed their comprehensive examinations and have been admitted to candidacy. Our updated policy states that students will follow the comprehensive examination guidelines of their hosting department for completion of their exam and advancement to candidacy, without any additional or alternate regulations being imposed by our MD/PhD Program.

	Exam date	Research supervisor	Research topic
 Wissam Nassrallah	18 September 2019	Dr. Lynn Raymond Neuroscience	Neuroprotective Effect of Sigma-1 Receptor & Activin A on Synaptic Function & Ca ²⁺ Handling in Huntington
 Alvin Qiu	16 January 2020	Drs. Martin Hirst and Torsten Nielsen Interdisciplinary Oncology	Epigenomic Dysregulation in Synovial Sarcoma

Naotaka Ide MD/PhD Studentship

Our program has recently received a generous donation from **Mrs. Noriko Ide** to establish a Naotake Ide MD/PhD Studentship. Our sincere thanks to Mrs. Ide who made a donation in memory of her late husband, **Mr. Naotake Ide**, who passed away this past summer. Mr. Ide had dementia later in life and had wished to give back to his community, Mrs. Ide is continuing on with his wish. The donation is to provide stipend support for our students who specialize in research on dementia or dementia-related research. Prospective applicants with an interest in this area of research are particularly encouraged to apply to UBC.

Mrs. Noriko Ide was offered a tour to the UBC Centre of Brain Health on 17 December 2019. Her visit to the Centre was accompanied by **Dr. Lynn Raymond**. Mrs. Ide was also introduced to some of the principal investigators in the Centre for dementia research during the visit.

MD/PhD Award Winners

We take pride in the ongoing achievements of our students. This is a list of students who won awards in the 2019 winter term. Congratulations!

Katherine Baillie – Daisy Scholarship

Rozlyn Boutin – Richard A. Robertson Memorial Service Award in Medicine

Philip Edgcumbe – [Joule](#) Emerging Physician Innovator Grant

Luke MacLean – UBC Faculty of Applied Science Graduate Award

Adam Ramzy – [Canadian Medical Hall of Fame 2019](#)

Rohit Singla – UBC Faculty of Applied Science Graduate Award

– [BC MEDTECH Graduate Award in Biomedical Engineering Award](#)

– Excellent Reviewer (top 5%) for the Machine Learning 4 Health Workshop, NeurIPS 2019

Michael Skinnider – Walter C Sumner memorial Fellowship

– Roman M Babicki Fellowship in Medical Research

– Dorothy May Ladner Memorial Fellowship

– CIHR Canada Graduate Scholarships Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplement Award

Mark Trinder – Harry and Florence Dennison Fellowship in Medical Research

Alvin Qiu – John Bosdet Memorial Fund Award

– BC Cancer Summit Poster Award

Allen Zhang – BC Cancer Outstanding Trainee Publication

– BC Cancer Research (Lloyd Skarsgard) Excellence Prize

BC Cancer Summit (November 21-23, 2019).

Alvin Qiu's poster was selected for an oral presentation. "Characterizing SS18-SSX fusion oncoprotein dependency in synovial sarcoma and its enhancer landscape". One of the invited speakers, **Dr. Alex Cagan**, a science illustrator and a post-doctoral fellow from the Martincorena lab at the Sanger Institute, sketched this picture of Alvin during his presentation. Bravo!



CSCI/CITAC Annual Conference and Young Investigators Forum

Our program funded eight MD/PhD students to present their outstanding research at the Canadian Society for Clinical Investigation (CSCI) / Clinician Investigator Trainee Associate of Canada (CITAC) Young Investigators Forum, which was held 8-10 November 2019, in Banff, Alberta.

Daniel Kwon's abstract was ranked top 8 and received an oral presentation slot for this year's conference. **Alvin Qiu** and **Rozlyn Boutin** won poster awards. Congratulations!



Daniel Kwon presented “Novel [^{18}F]-, [^{68}Ga]-, and [^{177}Lu]-based theranostic agents targeting the C-X-C chemokine receptor 4”

Katrina Besler presented “The role of exogenous lysosomal acid lipase in enhancing cholesterol removal from arterial smooth muscle foam cells”

Andy An presented “Characterizing long-term consequences of macrophage cellular reprogramming in the context of sepsis”

Lianne Cho presented “Psychometric properties of the Beck Depression Inventory in a precariously-housed sample”

Alvin Qiu presented “Characterizing SS18-SSX fusion oncoprotein dependency in synovial sarcoma and its enhancer landscape”

Paulina Piesik presented “Tropical tretinoin as an immunomodulatory therapeutic for allergic and autoimmune disease”

Rozlyn Boutin presented “*Pichia kudriavzevii* is an asthma-exacerbating yeast of the infant gut microbiota inhibited by bacterial short chain fatty acids.”

Rohit Singla presented “Quantitative measurement of tacrolimus-induced tremor in renal transplant recipients: A prospective feasibility study”



Alvin Qiu

In addition to reduced tuition and guaranteed stipend support, the UBC MD/PhD Program provides funding for our students to travel to MD/PhD student meetings in Canada and the USA.

We also provide our students with an annual personal research allowance, and support student social events.

MD/PhD Social

The MD/PhD group and their families had a wonderful time in the evening of 5 September 2019. We celebrated our recent graduates, incoming class of new students and **Dr. Lynn Raymond's** career as our MD/PhD Program Director. **Dr. Anthony Chow**, Founding Program Director, **Dr. Torsten Nielsen**, current Program Director, and **Dr. Liam Brunham**, our new Associate Director, were also present. **Dr. Cheryl Holmes**, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education Program joined our event as well. Our annual summer social event serves as a great opportunity for our significant others to join us for fun and to be part of the MD/PhD student community. Some of the students gathered for a card game that afternoon, and the group pictures turned out really well! Thanks everyone, for making this event so memorable



Students at the card game.



From left: Dr. Anthony Chow, Dr. Lynn Raymond, Jane Lee, Dr. Torsten Nielsen, Dr. Liam Brunham.



Our great group photo. Cheers!

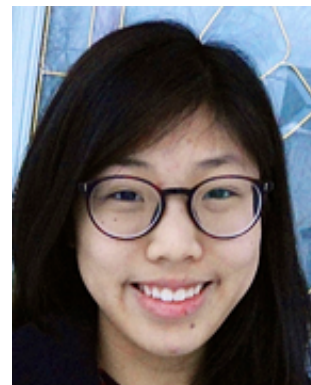
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On 18 December 2019, **Dr. Anthony Chow**, **Andrea Jones**, **Philip Edgcumbe** and **Victoria Baronas** got together for a visit. Dr. Chow, our Founding Director, kindly bought the students coffee and shared some great career advice with them. Thanks, Tony!



MD/PhD Students

Lianne Cho was nominated by the Faculty of Medicine to attend the [Canadian Conference on Physician Health](#) (CCPH), 3-5 October 2019, in St. John's, Newfoundland. The goal of this initiative is to promote engagement and support emerging leaders and champions who are passionate about physician health and wellness. Over 350 physicians, residents, students, researchers, administrators, and educators from across the country set to share knowledge, insights and experience related to this year's theme: *Changing Tides: Shifting cultures and creating safe spaces – encouraging dialogue around reducing stigma and promoting supportive training and practice environments*. The participants had the opportunity to network with peers, local influencers and established leaders in the community, as well as learn about tools/resources that will empower them to be agents of culture change, in-support of a healthy and vibrant profession.



Lianne Cho

Back in October 2019, I had the pleasure of being the UBC medical undergraduate delegate to the Canadian Conference on Physician Health. The theme of the conference was “Changing Tides: Shifting Cultures”, and focused on the idea that culture change is needed in medicine to facilitate and achieve physician wellness. While much of the conversation surrounding physician health has previously been about enhancing wellness outside of the profession, such as through eating well, sleeping and exercising enough, and the fostering of external relationships and hobbies, true physician wellness must also involve increasing joy within the profession itself. This can be done through improving camaraderie between colleagues, as well as finding a place for humour in medicine, to name some ideas. Another facet of culture change involves expanding the notion of “workplace health and safety” to include “psychological safety”. A current barrier to physician wellness is the fear of making mistakes and the shame associated with them; a proposed solution is to implement peer support programs and to create more spaces for shared vulnerability between healthcare providers in the face of adverse events. Overall, the conference was a great opportunity to meet physicians and students from across the country and to learn about the current initiatives, research, and ideas regarding physician health. Since October, I have also shared what I learned with Medical Undergraduate Society, Wellness Initiative Network, Faculty of Medicine Strategic Planning Committee, and Student Affairs members. Lastly, I will be certain to remain engaged with the topic as I move through my own training and career.

Lianne Cho

Lianne also represented the MD/PhD Program in promoting our program in other events. On 22 November 2019, Lianne was a panelist at the UBC Life Sciences Research Night event called “M.D. vs M.D./Ph.D. vs Ph.D.”, A Day in the Life: Basic vs. Translational vs. Clinical Research, representing the MD/PhD perspective, which was put on by the UBC Undergraduate Research Opportunities. The attendees were mostly UBC undergraduate and graduate students who are looking for research opportunities.

MD/PhD Students (con't)

On 14 November 2019, **Rohit Singla**, our student representative at the Island Medical Program (IMP – based in Victoria), gave a lunch-n-learn session to the local IMP class, graduate students, and faculty.

Rohit's talk was focused around his thesis background and his proposed work, a bit of chronic kidney disease and transplantation (in particular identifying deficits in current management), and some of the research questions he is asking in the upcoming years. His proposed thesis topic is "Ultrasound for chronic kidney disease: Developing intelligent renal ultrasound". The talk was also a reasonable deliverable for his Flexible and Enhanced Learning (FLEX) med school course project which is mainly a literature review for his overall thesis.

Rohit also talked about an overview and timeline of the MD/PhD Program, and the path going forward for him in MD/PhD, and other information that may be interesting to students. He had a very engaged audience, who asked some very insightful questions. There was a good turnout, including five faculty -- histology, nephrology, internal medicine, and family medicine – who were in the audience.

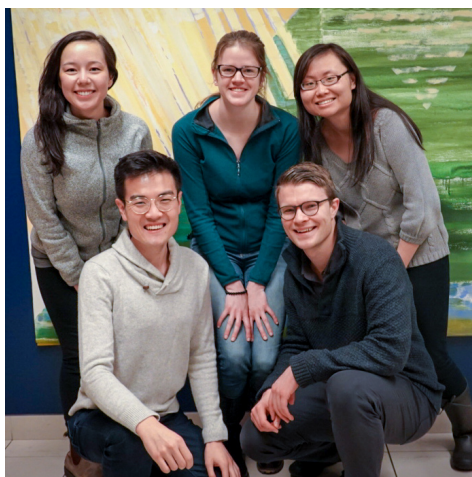


Rohit Singla

The MD/PhD Program highly supports this lunch seminar type of presentation from our students at some point in their training. It is a somewhat different type of talk from a typical science presentation, but still a great science promotion and knowledge translation avenue.



Our Grad Class of 2020 (**Victoria Baronas, Philip Edgcumbe, Andrea Jones, Cynthia Min and Eric Zhao**) got together after the holiday season and had some fun. They took some group photos and shared their joy with us.



Alumni News



Dr. Paul Yong

Each year, the UBC Faculty of Medicine recognizes faculty and staff members for excellence in teaching, research, administration, innovation and public service. Congratulations to our very own **Dr. Paul Yong**, [MD/PhD alumnus](#), for winning an award for Distinguished Achievement: Excellence in Clinical or Applied Research. Dr. Yong is Assistant Professor, Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology (Division of Gynaecologic Specialties, Division of Reproductive Endocrinology & Infertility).

Dr. Yong completed his UBC MD/PhD degree in Experimental Medicine, then a Residency in Obstetrics & Gynaecology, followed by a Clinical Fellowship in Endometriosis, Pelvic Pain, & Advanced Laparoscopy at UBC. He is Director of the Graduate Program in Reproductive and Developmental Sciences, Director of the Obstetrics and Gynaecology Residency Rotation in Minimally Invasive Surgery, and Research Director and a Gynaecologist at the BC Women's Centre for Pelvic Pain & Endometriosis. He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses; and provides research supervision for undergraduate students, graduate students, residents, clinical fellows and post-doctoral fellows.

Dr. Yong's research interests are in endometriosis and pelvic pain, and his translational research interests include bio-banking of endometriosis, gene sequencing in endometriosis, and investigating nerve formation in the pelvis as a cause of pain.

MD/PhD "Building Bridges Seminar Series" - ALL ARE WELCOME

Our seminar series aims to illuminate the relationship that exists between clinical practice and medical research, allowing MD/PhD and other interested students to hear about different career tracks and various ways they may be able to combine clinical and research work. In addition to speaking about their active research, the invited speakers discuss their experiences and training backgrounds, share their advice with prospective clinician-scientists, and give their opinions on career development options for clinician-scientists. All faculty, clinical investigator trainees of any stripe, students in the Faculty of Medicine and prospective applicants to our program are invited. Our usual venue is at the Medical Student Alumni Centre, 6:00-7:00 pm, and [web link](#).

Date and Time: 18 November 2019

Invited speaker: **Dr. Keith Walley**, Professor, Department of Medicine (Critical Care Medicine), UBC

Thanks to Dr. Walley for sharing his clinical and research experiences with us.

For information on upcoming seminars, please visit our seminar [webpage](#).

Comments and Suggestions

We welcome comments and suggestions to the UBC MD/PhD Program and to our newsletters.

Please send comments to the MD/PhD Program office, 2894 Detwiller Pavilion, 2255 Wesbrook Mall, UBC, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6T 2A1. Phone: 1-604-822-7198 Fax: 1-604-822-7917

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