Research Topics in Gastrointestinal Disease: A report on the 11th Symposium

Organizing Committee:

Nicola Jones MD PhD FRCPC, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario

Ken Croitoru MD FRCPC, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario

André Buret PhD, VP-CAG Research Affairs, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta

Paul Bélanger, Canadian Institutes of Health Research

Kevin Glasgow CEO, Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada

Louise Hope, CAG National Office

The Canadian gastrointestinal (GI) research community is a world leader in advancing our understanding of many areas of physiology and pathophysiology relevant to GI disease. These highly successful research programs have created an excellent cohort of graduate and postgraduate research trainees involved in GI research at institutions across Canada. These trainees play an instrumental role in the discoveries and new knowledge that has emerged from their laboratories. Many of them are funded by the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology (CAG) in collaboration with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada (CCFC), and a number of industry partners.

To recognize the value of the Canadian GI trainees' outstanding research contributions, and to promote and encourage the continued efforts of the graduate and postgraduate research trainees in basic and clinical sciences, the CAG, CHIR and CCFC held the 11th Symposium on Research Topics in GI diseases on February 22 to 23, 2012 in Montreal, Quebec (in advance of Canadian Digestive Diseases Week [CDDW]). The goal of this meeting was to provide research trainees with an opportunity to informally present their original research from diverse disciplines, to their peers and to a selection of faculty from across Canada. In this forum, trainees actively participated in the discussions of papers in an open setting. This year's program consisted of a series of superb presentations describing cutting-edge research with 39 podium scientific presentations of basic and clinical gastroenterology-related research, covering GI development, pathogenesis of esophago-gastrointestinal inflammation and healing, enteric microbiota and pathogens, including bacteria that promote cancer, and gastric ulceration, enteric nerves, and epithelial transport and barrier function. The addition of a 'reviewer role' provided all participants with the opportunity to review another presenter's abstract (as assigned by the program organizers) in advance of the presentation and to be prepared to ask a question related to the abstract presentation allowing the trainees to function in the 'session chair role'. The keynote session 'Developing a translational research program: Perspectives from a Clinician scientist' was presented by Dr Paul Beck. This year's career development toolbox session focused on 'Writing a manuscript'. Dr Catharine Walsh presented a practical talk with key tips that was followed by small group breakout sessions in which trainees were able to begin to implement some of the key points reviewed. This year the program included a combined session and opportunity for interaction with the Scholars

and Gastroenterology Residents-in-Training (GRIT) attendees: 'GI Research: What's in it for me?' presented by CAG's McKenna Lecturer, Dr Richard Hunt.

Similar to previous years, a major success of the meeting was that it provided a venue in which trainees could meet their peers from across Canada, develop research skills and initiate collaborations, thus developing contacts for their future research career and the future of Canadian GI research. The majority of participants rated the program as good to excellent, and commented that attendance at the meeting offered great interaction with mentors and trainees. The Research Topics meeting provides a valuable opportunity for young researchers to exchange learning.

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Participants and faculty in the 11th Symposium on Research Topics in Gastrointestinal Disease, February 22 to 23, 2012. Participants: Sarah Akierman, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB; Frann Antignano, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC; Jennifer Beatty, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB; Amol Bhargava, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB; Maude Bilodeau, Université de Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke, QC; Rory Blackler, McMaster University, Hamilton, ON; Salah Boudjadi, Université de Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke, QC; Jacob Charette, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB; James Cotton, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB; Geneviève Coulombe, Université de Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke, QC; Sandeep Dhillon, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON; Subhankar Dolai, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON; Maria Fernando, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB; Kyle Flannigan, McMaster University, Hamilton, ON; Jessica Gagné Sansfaçon, Université de Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke, QC; Heather Galipeau, McMaster University, Hamilton, ON; Véronique Giroux, Université de Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke, QC; Raquel Guerrero Alba, Queen's University, Kingston, ON; Vadim Iablokov, University of

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