Canadian Association of Gastroenterology Research Committee Report 2012

André Buret PhD, VP Research Affairs

The Canadian Association of Gastroenterology (CAG) and its Foundation, the Canadian Digestive Health Foundation (CDHF), in collaboration with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the CAG-CDHF partners, aims to promote excellence in research. The overarching objective is that this research, in turn, will lead to new discoveries that will translate into improved health for Canadians. Moreover, this partnership will sustain and increase this capacity through high-quality education and research training of talented young scientists and clinicians in gastroenterology. The CAG strategic plan is to sustain its strong support of biomedical research while increasing support for research in CIHR pillars 3 and 4, including outcomes research, quality assurance and knowledge translation. The present report, on behalf of the research committee (Table 1), outlines another very successful year for this partnership program.

Details relating to eligibility and application processes for all of the following awards are available on the CAG website (www.cag-acg.org/research). The review and assessment of every application complies with CIHR standards and guidelines, and any potential conflicts of interest are meticulously identified and avoided.

Operating Grant and New Investigator Award

One operating grant and one new investigator salary award (Table 2) were awarded this year.

CAG-CIHR-Partnered Postdoctoral Operating Fellowship Program

The fellowship program is the cornerstone in the CAG research activities and its sustained success makes it a model for other societies. A large number of applications were received again this year and with support from the CIHR, the CCFC and CAG's industry partners (identified in Tables 2 to 5) 15 fellowships were funded (Table 3). Two fellows received CAG/CIHR awards in name only because their applications ranked at a level to be funded entirely by the CIHR.

TABLE 1
Members of the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology Research Committee 2012

Position	Name	Institution	Term
VP Research Affairs	André Buret	University of Calgary (Calgary, Alberta)	2011–2014
Member	Nathalie Perreault	University of Sherbrooke (Sherbrooke, Quebec)	2011–2014
Member	Aleixo Muise	University Toronto (Toronto, Ontario)	2011–2014
Member	Jennifer Jones	University of Saskatchewan (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)	2011–2014
Member	Maida Sewitch	McGill University (Montreal, Quebec)	2011–2014
Member	Bill Sahl	University of British Columbia (Vancouver, British Columbia)	2011–2014
Member	John Wallace	McMaster University (Hamilton, Ontario)	2011–2014
Member	Decker Butzner	University of Calgary	2012–2014
Member	Colby Zaph	University of British Columbia	2012–
Member (trainee)	Tamia Lapointe	University of Calgary	2012–

CDHF-CIHR PhD Studentship Program

Three PhD students (Table 6) were funded under this partnership program.

Summer Studentships

It is critical that young investigators be supported at all levels of their training. Thus, in partnership with CCFC, 14 students received awards (\$7,000 each) to work in laboratories of recent or established investigators whose interests cover many facets of gut function in health and in disease (Table 4).

Resident Research Program

Ten awards were made available with the generous partnership from Takeda Canada, Shire Canada, Warner Chilcott, and Aptalis Pharma (Table 5).

Community Research Grant (CREG)

The CREG is an award specifically designed to assist community-based gastroenterologists, who are members of the CAG, take advantage of an operating research funding grant in digestive sciences. The CAG and the CDHF awarded the 2012 Community Research Grant to Dr Adrian Bak (Kelowna, British Columbia) for his project titled 'Potential of the water method of colonoscopy as a universal screening test'.

Workshop Grants

Two CAG Workshop Grants were provided: one for the Farncombe Symposium Workshop (September 22 to 25, 2011) and a second for the Kananaskis Inflammation Workshop (January 21, 2012). These workshops make a significant contribution to education in gastroenterology (GI) research, and help to showcase the cutting-edge GI research from Canada and beyond.

The CAG is proud to acknowledge its Benefactor Corporate Sponsors:

Abbott Canada

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Janssen Inc

Takeda Canada Inc

TABLE 2
Funded grants 2012

Candidate	Grant	Term, years	Institution
Julia Liu	CCFC-CIHR-CAG New Investigator Salary Award	5	University of Alberta (Edmonton, Alberta)
Laura Sly	Abbott-CIHR-CAG Operating Grant	1	University of British Columbia (Vancouver, British Columbia)

CAG Canadian Association of Gastroenterology; CCFC Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada; CIHR Canadian Institutes of Health Research

TABLE 3
Funded Postdoctoral Fellowships 2012

Candidate	Award	Institution	Term, years	Supervisor(s)
Abdel Elkadri	Janssen-CIHR-CAG Fellowship	The Hospital for Sick Children (Toronto, Ontario)	2	Aleixo Muise
David Kevans	Abbott-CIHR-CAG Fellowship	Mount Sinai Hospital (Toronto, Ontario)	2	Mark Silverberg and Ken Croitoru
Alexandre Morizot	Abbott-CIHR-CAG Fellowship	McGill University (Montreal, Quebec)	2	Maya Saleh
Menno Oudhoff	Janssen-CIHR-CAG Fellowship	University of British Columbia (Vancouver, British Columbia)	2	Colby Zaph
Scott Patterson	Ferring-CIHR-CAG Fellowship	University of British Columbia	2	Meagan Levings
David Prescott	CCFC-CIHR-CAG Fellowship	University of Toronto (Toronto, Ontario)	2	Stephen Girardin
David Reed	CCFC-CIHR-CAG Fellowship	University of London (United Kingdom)	2	Ashley Blackshaw
Jose Reyes-Hernandez	Janssen-CIHR-CAG Fellowship	University of Calgary (Calgary, Alberta)	2	Derek M ^c Kay
Susan Robertson	Janssen-CIHR-CAG Fellowship	University of Toronto	2	Dana Philpott
Martin Stahl	CCFC-CIHR-CAG Fellowship	University of British Columbia	2	Bruce Vallance
Ali Rezaie	CAG-CIHR Fellowship (in name only)	University of Calgary	2	Gilaad Kaplan and Subrata Ghosh
Carmen Dominguez-Brauer	Takeda-CIHR-CAG Fellowship	University of Toronto	2	Tak Mak
Jocelyn Silvester	CAG-CIHR Fellowship	University of Manitoba (Winnipeg, Manitoba)	2	John Walker and Ciaran Kelly
Subhanka Dolai	CAG-CIHR Fellowship	University of Toronto	2	Herbert Gaisano
Paul James	CAG-CIHR Fellowship (in name only)	Sunnybrook Research Institute (Toronto, Ontario)	1	Elaine Yong and Jill Tinmouth

CAG Canadian Association of Gastroenterology; CIHR Canadian Institutes of Health Research

TABLE 4
Canadian Association of Gastroenterology and Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada-funded Summer Studentships 2012

Candidate	Supervisor	Sponsor	Institution
Edwin Ka-Ho Cheng	Carla Coffin	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	University of Calgary (Calgary, Alberta)
Daniella DeCoffe	Deanna Gibson	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	University of British Columbia (Vancouver, British Columbia)
Jeffrey Kay	Mark Silverberg	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	Mount Sinai Hospital (Toronto, Ontario)
Tony Kwon	John Brumell	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	The Hospital for Sick Children (Toronto, Ontario)
Tahrin Mahmood	Ping-Chang Yang	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	McMaster University (Hamilton, Ontario)
Yaei Mansour	Eytan Wine	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	University of Alberta (Edmonton, Alberta)
Sean Ridout	Patricia Brubaker	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	University of Toronto (Toronto, Ontario)
David Rodrigues	Nicola Jones	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology- CDHF Ivan Beck Award*	The Hospital for Sick Children
Matthew Bernstein	John Walker	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada	University of Manitoba (Winnipeg, Manitoba)
Bonnie Cheung	Laura Sly	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada	University of British Columbia
Jordan Iannuzzi	Derek M ^c Kay	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada	University of Calgary
Stephanie Mah	Julia Liu	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada	University of Alberta
Lucas Mastropaolo	Aleixo Muise	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada	The Hospital for Sick Children
Tessa van Tol	Meagan Levings	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada	University of British Columbia

*Awarded to the highest-ranked applicant. Award includes an additional \$1,000. CDHF Canadian Digestive Health Foundation

TABLE 5
Resident Research Awards 2012

Candidate	Supervisor	Sponsor	Institution
Meredith Borman	Mark Swain	Aptalis Pharma	University of Calgary (Calgary, Alberta)
Peter Church	Anne Griffiths	Takeda Canada	The Hospital for Sick Children (Toronto, Ontario)
Abdul Elkadri	Aleixo Muise	Warner Chilcott	The Hospital for Sick Children
Vivian Huang	Geoffrey Nguyen	Aptalis Pharma	Mount Sinai Hospital (Toronto, Ontario)
Zain Kassam	John Marshall and Paul Moayyedi	Takeda Canada	McMaster University (Hamilton, Ontario)
Julia McNabb-Baltar	Alan Barkun	Shire Canada	McGill University (Montreal, Quebec)
Matthew Sadler	Gilaad Kaplan	Takeda Canada	University of Calgary
Michael Stewart	Donald MacIntosh	Takeda Canada	Dalhousie University (Halifax, Nova Scotia)
Pamela Valentino	Binita Kamath	Shire Canada	University of Toronto (Toronto, Ontario)
Mohammad Yaghoobi	Alan Barkun	Takeda Canada	McGill University

TABLE 6
Canadian Digestive Health Foundation-Canadian Institutes of Health Research Studentship Program 2012

Candidate	Institution
Maria Fernando	University of Calgary (Calgary, Alberta)
Connie Kim	University of Toronto (Toronto, Ontario)
Ajitha Thanabalasuriar	McGill University (Montreal, Quebec)

CCFC-CAG Partnership

The CCFC continues to be a key partner in the CAG research program and IBD research, a major focus of the research being conducted. The summaries (Tables 2, 3 and 4) show that CCFC supported three Fellowships, one New Investigator salary award and six summer studentships.

Congratulations to all the successful awardees. We look forward to your contributions and your continued participation in the CAG research program. And again, many thanks to CIHR and CCFC and the CAG industry partners – the 14 summer studentships, 10 resident research awards, 15 fellowships, one salary award and one operating grant total a research dollar commitment in 2012 of \$1,974,000.

CANADIAN DIGESTIVE DISEASES WEEK 2012

In addition to reviewing research applications, the other main role of the research committee is review of abstracts submitted to Canadian Digestive Diseases Week (CDDW), which showcases the best of Canadian GI research. A total of 330 abstracts were accepted to the core CDDW/Canadian Association for the Study of the Liver (CASL) Winter Meeting scientific program: 49 as CAG or CASL oral presentations, and the remainder in one of two poster sessions.

The following are the 2012 recipients of CAG awards:

- Dr Charles Bernstein (University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba) – Research Excellence Award
- Dr Elena Verdu (McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario) – Young Investigator Award

- Dr Nicola Jones (University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario) – Visiting Research Professor
- Dr Connie Switzer (University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta) – Education Excellence Award
- Dr Clarence Wong (University of Alberta) – Young Educator Award
- Dr David Armstrong (McMaster University) – Visiting Clinical Professor
- Dr Richard Hunt (McMaster University) – The RD McKenna Memorial Lecturer

The 2012 student research prizes were awarded based on the quality of abstracts submitted to CDDW as follows:

CAG sponsored:

K Brown, University of British Columbia (Vancouver, British Columbia)
 J Cotton, University of Calgary (Calgary, Alberta)

CCFC sponsored:

JM Natividad, McMaster University
 JJ Kim, McMaster University

It has once again been an excellent year for Canadian GI research and everyone involved deserves congratulations. Should CAG members have questions relating to the work of Research Affairs, or proposals on how to expand or promote our activities, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

*With Thanks,
 André Buret
 VP Research Affairs*

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