Canadian Association of Gastroenterology Research Committee Report 2013

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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 which 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. This 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. The New Investigator Salary Award is in name only because the application ranked at a level to be funded entirely by the CIHR.

CAG-CIHR-Partnered Post-Doctoral 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 support from CIHR, the CCFC and CAG's industry partners (identified in tables 2, 3, 5 and 6) 10 fellowships were funded (Table 3). One fellow

received CAG-CIHR awards in name only as their applications ranked at a level to be funded entirely by the CIHR.

CDHF-CIHR SHOPP PhD Studentship Program

Six PhD students, three awarded in 2011 and three awarded in 2012 (Table 4) continue to be funded in 2013 under this partnership program. As of the 2012-2013 competition, the CIHR has discontinued the Small Health Organization Partnership Program (SHOPP), which was used to support this program.

Summer Studentships

It is critical that young investigators be supported at all levels of their training. The CAG supported nine awards (\$5,000 each). The CCFC supported six awards (\$5,000 each). The CDHF supported the 2013 Ivan Beck Award (\$500) in partnership with the CAG; Ms Megan Levings (UBC) received a total award of \$7,000. Funds support students to work in labs of recent and established investigators whose interests cover many facets of gut function in health and in disease. (Table 5).

Resident Research Program

Three awards were made available with the generous partnership from Shire and Warner Chilcott (Table 6).

Workshop Grants

Three CAG Workshop Grants were provided; one for the Banff Inflammation Workshop (January 31 to February 3, 2013), one for the 16th International Congress of Mucosal Immunology (July 17 to 21, 2013) and one for the Sherbrooke 10th Symposium on the Physiology and Disease of Digestive Tract (September 11 to 13, 2013). These workshops make a significant contribution to education in gastrointestinal (GI) research, and help to showcase the cutting-edge GI research from Canada and beyond.

TABLE 1
Members of the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology Research Committee 2013

Position	Name	Institution	Term
VP Research Affairs	André Buret	University of Calgary	2011–2014
Member	Nathalie Perreault	University of Sherbrooke	2011–2014
Member	Aleixo Muise	University Toronto	2011–2014
Member	Jennifer Jones	University of Saskatchewan	2011–2014
Member	Maida Sewitch	McGill University	2011–2014
Member	Bill Sahl	University of British Columbia	2011–2014
Member	John Wallace	McMaster University	2011–2014
Member	Decker Butzner	University of Calgary	2012–2014
Member	Colby Zaph	University of British Columbia	2012–2014
Member	Eytan Wine	University of Alberta	2013–2016
Member	Waliul Khan	McMaster University	2013–2016
Member	Francois Boudreau	University of Sherbrooke	2013–2016
Member (trainee)	Tamia Lapointe	University of Calgary	2012–

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TABLE 2
Funded grants (2013)

Candidate	Grant	Term, years	Institution
Georgia Perona-Wright	CCFC-CIHR-CAG New Investigator Salary Award*	5	University of British Columbia
Alice Mui	AbbVie-CIHR-CAG Operating Grant	1	University of British Columbia

*In name only. CAG Canadian Association of Gastroenterology; CCFC Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada; CIHR Canadian Institutes of Health Research

TABLE 3
Funded Postdoctoral Fellowships (2013)

Candidate	Award	Institution	Term, years	Supervisor(s)
Khaled Barakat	Aptalis-CIHR-CAG Fellowship	University of Alberta	2	Michael Houghton
Abdolamir Landi	Takeda-CIHR-CAG Fellowship	University of Alberta	2	Michael Houghton
Misagh Alipout	CIHR-CAG Fellowship	University of Alberta	2	Julia Liu
Tamia Lapointe	CIHR-CAG Fellowship	University of Calgary	2	Christophe Altier
Jean-Paul Motta	CCFC-CIHR-CAG Fellowship	University of Calgary	2	John Wallace
Yasmin Nasser	CCFC-CIHR-CAG Fellowship	Queen's University	2	Stephen Vanner
Sarah O'Donnell	CCFC-CIHR-CAG Fellowship	Mt Sinai Hospital	2	Mark Silverberg and Ken Croitoru
Galliano Zanello	CCFC-CIHR-CAG Fellowship	University of Toronto	2	Ken Croitoru
Paul James	CIHR-CAG Fellowship (in name only)	University of Calgary	2	Stephen Heitman and Jill Tinmouth
Laura Greenfield	CCFC-CIHR-CAG Fellowship	The Hospital for Sick Children	2	Nicola Jones

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

TABLE 4
Canadian Digestive Health Foundation-Canadian Institutes of Health Research (SHOPP) Studentship Program 2013

Candidate	Awarded	Institution
Maria R Fernando	2012	University of Calgary
Kyra Jones	2012	University of Waterloo
Connie J Kim	2012	University Toronto
Asanga Samarakoon	2011	University of British Columbia
Ajitha Thanabalasuriar	2011	McGill University
Lauren Van Der Kraak	2011	McGill University

TABLE 5
Summer Studentships 2013

Candidate	Supervisor	Sponsor	Institution
Na'ama Avitzur	Phil Sherman	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	The Hospital for Sick Children
Rusha Barua	Pierre-Yves von der Weid	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	University of Calgary
Alycia Fletcher	Paul Beck	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	University of Calgary
Maria Gentile	Ira King	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	McGill University
Tiffany Miller	Michael Blennerhassett	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	Queen's University
David Rattray	Colby Zaph	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	University of British Columbia
Jacqueline Siu	Megan Levings	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology- Canadian Digestive Health Foundation Ivan Beck Award*	University of British Columbia
Hayley Thornton	Christopher Waterhouse	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	University of Calgary
Boris Virine	Carla Coffin	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	University of Calgary
Beini Wang	Michael Beyak	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	Queen's University
Zhen Zhao	Aleixo Muise	Canadian Association of Gastroenterology	University of Toronto
Eun Young Kang	Paul Kubes	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada	University of Calgary
Melissa Power	Andrew Stadnyk	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada	Dalhousie University
Jenna Ries	Bruce Vallance	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada	University of British Columbia
Joshua Terc	Simon Hirota	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada	University of Calgary
Andrew Vegso	Wallace MacNaughton	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada	University of Calgary
Wen Zhao	Patricia Brubaker	Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada	University of Toronto

*Awarded to the highest ranked applicant. Award includes an additional \$1,000

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 5) show that CCFC supported five 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 CAG research program. And again, many thanks to CIHR and CCFC and the CAG industry partners – the 17 Summer Studentships, three Resident Research awards, 10 Fellowships, one New Investigator Salary Award,

TABLE 6
Resident Research Awards (2013)

Candidate	Supervisor	Sponsor	Institution
Keith McIntosh	Bill Paterson	Shire	Queen's University
Neeraj Narula	John Marshall	Warner Chilcott	McMaster University
Stefanos Voglis	David Armstrong and Ted Xenodemetropoulos	Shire	McMaster University

and one operating grant add up to a research dollar commitment in 2013 of \$1,095,000.

CANADIAN DIGESTIVE DISEASES WEEK (CDDW) 2013

In addition to reviewing research applications, the other main role of Research Affairs is review of abstracts submitted to CDDW, which showcases the best of Canadian GI research. A total of 298 abstracts were accepted to the core CDDW/Canadian Association for the Study of the Liver (CASL) Winter Meeting scientific program; 47 as CAG or CASL oral presentations and the remainder in one of two poster sessions.

The following are the 2013 recipients of CAG awards:

- Dr Nathalie Rivard (University of Sherbrooke) – Research Excellence Award
- Dr Gilaad Kaplan (University of Calgary) – Young Investigator Award
- Dr Paul Beck (University of Calgary) – Visiting Research Professor
- Dr Sylvain Coderre (University of Calgary) – Education Excellence Award
- Dr Kevin Waschke (McGill University) – Young Educator Award
- Dr Robert Enns (University of British Columbia) – Visiting Clinical Professor
- Dr Fergus Shanahan (University College Cork) – The RD McKenna Memorial Lecturer.

The 2013 student research prizes were awarded based on the quality of abstracts submitted to CDDW as follows:

CAG sponsored:

F Brial, University of Sherbrooke
J Lau, McMaster University

CCFC sponsored:

J Cotton, University of Calgary
Z Al Adham, The Hospital for Sick Children

Honourable Mention:

C Matisz, University of Calgary
M Fernando, University of Calgary

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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