

# Research Update

Stay informed with news from Heart & Stroke

## NATIONAL

### Official notifications 2019/2020

Official award notifications for the 2019/2020 Heart & Stroke research funding competitions (Grants-In-Aid and Senior Personnel Awards) have been sent to all successful applicants. While successful applicants haven't yet accepted their awards, we are pleased to report that we had a success rate of ~25% in the GIA program (73 offers made out of 289 applications) and between 25 and 70% in the Senior Personnel Awards. The Grant Management Guidelines can be found on our [website](#).

Congratulations to all successful grant and award recipients!

### Launching our 2020/2021 competitions in late June

Preparations are underway to launch our GIA and Personnel Awards on June 28, 2019. [As previously advised](#), the GIA program will continue and be open to all career stages. We will launch two Personnel competitions: Research Fellowships for post-doctoral students and National New Investigator awards for those in the early years of their first full-time faculty appointment.

### Data at your fingertips!

Looking for the number of hospitalizations in your province as a result of stroke? Or perhaps you'd like to drill down to a particular age group or sex? Heart & Stroke's new online interactive Data Hub lets you customize hospital administrative data to suit your needs.

Our 2019 Report on Heart, Stroke and Vascular Cognitive Impairment, titled [\(Dis\)connected: How unseen links are putting us at risk](#), was based on a first-ever analysis of hospitalizations and rehospitalizations for these conditions in Canada between 2007 and 2017.

We took that data and created the Data Hub, which we're pleased to welcome you to use in a way that is most relevant to you and your research. [Access the hub here](#) and get started!

## Heart & Stroke Council Member Spotlight

### **Dr. Gavin Oudit: Member, Heart & Stroke Heart Failure council**

Gavin Oudit holds the Canada Research Chair in Heart Failure and is the Director of the Heart Function Clinic at the Mazankowski Alberta Heart Institute in Edmonton. His clinical activity is focused on heart failure, especially associated with iron-overload cardiomyopathy, neuromuscular dystrophy, Fabry's disease, metabolic disorders and idiopathic dilated cardiomyopathy. Gavin is a valued member of the Heart & Stroke Heart Failure council.



In February 2019, results of an international study led by Dr. Oudit was [published](#) in the journal *Nature Communications*. The team identified gelsolin as a key contributor to heart failure from dilated cardiomyopathy, and isolated a molecule, P13K alpha, that binds to and suppresses gelsolin. This work will advance the development of medications tailored for people living with enlarged hearts and advanced heart failure.



### **Dr. Mary L'Abbé: Member, Council on Mission: Priorities, Advice, Science and Strategy (CoMPASS)**

Mary L'Abbé is an expert in public health nutrition, nutrition policy, and food and nutrition regulations at the University of Toronto, where she [leads a research group](#) on Food and Nutrition Policy for Population Health. She has led Canada's National Sodium Reduction Strategy and the Trans Fat Task Force and serves on the World Health Organization Expert Advisory Panel on Nutrition. And in December 2018, Dr. Mary L'Abbé was named a member of the Order of Canada for her contributions to nutrition science.

Dr. L'Abbé brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to CoMPASS. CoMPASS comprises 35+ senior volunteers including Canadian researchers, clinicians and people with lived experience of heart disease and stroke, and provides strategic advice on our mission priorities, including research, health policy, advocacy, government relations, systems change, and patient engagement and support.

### **In Memoriam: Sonja Findlater, BSc (OT), MSc, PhD**

Heart & Stroke would like to honour the memory of Dr. Sonja Findlater, a respected member of Canada's stroke recovery research community, who died suddenly in an avalanche.

An experienced ice climber, Sonja was participating in a guided ice climb near Field, B.C. when the avalanche hit. She was airlifted to Foothills Medical Centre, but succumbed to her injuries.

Sonja, who grew up on a farm near Red Deer, Alta., began her career as an occupational therapist specializing in neuro-rehabilitation. After spending 16 years as a clinician, she went back to school to pursue graduate work, joining Dr. Sean Dukelow's lab at the University of Calgary in 2011.

Sonja gained her Master's degree in Kinesiology, followed by a PhD in neuroscience which she completed on February 14, 2019, just weeks before her death. Her research focused on understanding the neural correlates of proprioception (awareness of location or movement of one's limbs without vision) after stroke (acute and chronic), using neuroimaging and robotics.

On behalf of everyone at Heart & Stroke, we express our deepest condolences to her family, friends and colleagues.

### **Heart & Stroke Clinical Update**

Save the date for the **50th anniversary!**

December 6-7, 2019

[Pre-conference, December 5, 2019]

Hilton Toronto Downtown

### **Canadian Stroke Congress**

Save the date for the **9<sup>th</sup> Canadian Stroke Congress!**

October 3-5, 2019

Shaw Centre Ottawa

### **Save the date for the 72<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Cardiovascular Congress**

October 24-27, 2019

Palais des congrès de Montréal, Montreal QC

## **NOVA SCOTIA**

### **BrightRed Student Research Awards 2019/2020 Launch**

It's that time of year again, where the Nova Scotia Research Advisory Committee and Heart & Stroke staff gear up for the 2019/2020 BrightRed Student Research Awards.

Each year Heart & Stroke in Nova Scotia recognizes excellent emerging cardiovascular and cerebrovascular researchers at differing stages of their early career development. The *BrightRed Awards* provide financial support to students and trainees enrolled in research-based Masters, Doctoral, Postdoctoral, or Doctor of Medicine training programs at academic institutions in Nova Scotia.

The Nova Scotia Mission team is working alongside the local Research Advisory Committee (RAC) during this process, and would like to thank the following dedicated RAC members: Dr. Shaun Boe (Chair), Dr. Anne Sophie Champod, Dr. Angie Kolen, Dr. Catherine Mah and Dr. Said Mekary.

The call for *BrightRed* applications was released on **Friday, April 12, 2019** with a submission deadline of **Friday, May 10, 2019 by 4:00 p.m. (AST)**.

Stay tuned to Heart & Stroke's social channels for updates on the Nova Scotia *BrightRed* Student Research Awardee selection process.

### **2018 Dr. Greg Ferrier Research Award Recipient: Dr. Alex Quinn**

Congratulations to the 2018 Dr. Greg Ferrier Research Award Recipient: Dr. Alex Quinn based at Dalhousie University. The purpose of the Dr. Greg Ferrier Award is to recognize the principal investigator in Nova Scotia whose Grant-in-Aid proposal received the highest rating from Heart & Stroke's peer review process. Dr. Quinn's research examines specific genes that cause abnormalities that can be associated with arrhythmias, and how these abnormalities and arrhythmias may be treated and prevented. This research has the potential to significantly improve quality of life for those suffering from this debilitating and often deadly condition.

## BRITISH COLUMBIA & YUKON

On February 13, we teamed up with Heart & Stroke-funded researcher Dr. Tara Sedlak and the Canadian Women's Heart Health Alliance to host the inaugural **Wear Red Day** at UBC Robson Square.

Dr. Sedlak is Director of the Leslie Diamond Women's Heart Health Clinic and is internationally renowned for her work in women's heart health. She is the first certified women's heart health cardiologist in Canada.

The event brought together cardiovascular experts and patients to share their knowledge and experiences to raise awareness about women's heart health. Women are under-researched, under-diagnosed and -treated, under-supported, and under-aware. The Wear Red Day event aimed to promote dialogue and conversation around cardiac risk factors for women and signs and symptoms of early cardiovascular disease.

Giving the spotlight to a panel of truly excellent researcher and patient speakers, the event was well-attended by Heart & Stroke donors and a wide range of people engaged in promoting women's heart health. What a sea of supportive red!