

Publications of the Week

Cascading Epigenomic Analysis for Identifying Disease Genes from the Regulatory Landscape of GWAS Variants

First Author: Bernard Ng (pictured) | Senior Author: Sara Mostafavi
PLOS Genetics | Centre for Molecular Medicine and Therapeutics and UBC



The majority of genetic variants detected in genome wide association studies (GWAS) exert their effects on phenotypes through gene regulation. Motivated by this observation, the authors propose a multi-omic integration method that models the cascading effects of genetic variants from epigenome to transcriptome and eventually to the phenotype in identifying target genes influenced by risk alleles.

[Abstract](#)

Studying the *In Vivo* Application of a Liquid Dermal Scaffold in Promoting Wound Healing in a Mouse Model

First Author: Mohammadreza (Sam) Pakyari (pictured) | Senior Author: Aziz Ghahary
Experimental Dermatology | ICORD, SFU, and UBC



Lack of matrix deposition is one of the main factors that complicates the healing process of wounds. The aim of this study was to test the efficacy and safety of a liquid dermal scaffold, referred to as MeshFill, that can fill the complex network of tunnels and cavities which are usually found in chronic wounds and hence improve the healing process. The authors evaluated *in vitro* and *in vivo* properties of a novel liquid dermal scaffold in a delayed murine full-thickness wound model. [Abstract](#)

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Awards

Killam Awards for Drs. Cox and Kwan; PCF Young Investigator Award for Dr. Kwan

Vancouver Prostate Centre



Dr. Edmond Kwan (pictured) received the 2021 Amgen – Prostate Cancer Foundation (PCF) Young Investigator Award, and Dr. Kwan and Dr. Michael Cox were both recipients of UBC Killam awards. Dr. Kwan's award is for a project titled, "Integrated Tissue and Circulating Tumour DNA Profiling to Risk Stratify *De Novo* Metastatic Hormone-Sensitive Prostate Cancer Prior to Systemic Therapy".

[Read More](#)

Meet Cristen Molzahn – William and Dorothy Gilbert Graduate Scholarship Recipient

Michael Smith Laboratories



The recipient of this year's William and Dorothy Gilbert Scholarship, Cristen Molzahn (pictured) thinks fondly of the science class that became a turning point in her life. Seeking a new direction after art school, Molzahn enrolled in a chemistry class with a focus on neurodegenerative diseases. Cristen was amazed to learn how misfolded proteins were responsible for these diseases and became fascinated with the field. [Read More](#)

Supporting Researchers to Improve Patient Care and Outcomes: 2021 Health Professional-Investigator Awardees

Michael Smith Health Research BC



Now in its fifth year, the Health Professional-Investigator award is dedicated to support health professionals who are actively involved in patient care to conduct and apply research relevant to health and/or the health system. Dr. Ryan Flannigan (pictured) received funding for his project titled, "Leveraging Computational Modelling and 3D Bioprinting in Pursuit of a Regenerative Therapeutic Approach for Male Infertility". [Read More](#)

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Local News

Expert Takeaways from the COVID-19 Pandemic

Djavad Mowafaghian Centre for Brain Health



To better understand the impact of the COVID-19 virus on the brain and cognition, Dr. Teresa Liu-Ambrose's (pictured) team is comparing brain structure, brain function, and cognitive performance of adults with COVID-19 to those who tested negative or had no symptoms. Early evidence is showing that silent strokes might be caused by the virus, which in turn could lead to a higher risk of developing dementia. [Read More](#)

BCDRN Trainee Spotlight: Dr. Emily Wilts

BC Diabetes Research Network (BCDRN)



Dr. Emily Wilts (pictured) is a postdoctoral fellow in the Kieffer laboratory in the Department of Cellular and Physiological Sciences in the Life Sciences Institute at the UBC Vancouver campus. She just completed her first year of her postdoctoral fellowship and hopes to characterize the immunomodulatory polymers she synthesized this year. These polymers will be used in the future for islet encapsulation if they demonstrate immune protection. [Read More](#)

RNA-Scoop: Visualizing Transcripts from Single-Cell Transcriptomes

Canada's Michael Smith Genome Sciences Centre



Being able to visualize and depict scientific results is important as it not only facilitates effective communication of research, but it also allows for the detection of patterns and emerging characteristics within the data itself. Researchers from Dr. Inanç Birol's (pictured) lab developed RNA-Scoop, an interactive tool for visualizing differential transcript expression from single-cell transcriptome datasets. [Read More](#)

Dr. Lori Brotto, in Her Words

BC Children's Hospital Research Institute



Dr. Lori Brotto is Executive Director of the Women's Health Research Institute, Canada Research Chair in Women's Sexual Health, Director of the UBC Sexual Health Laboratory, and a Professor in the university's Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. She also maintains a private practice. Dr. Brotto will moderate a Women in Science event on February 10, 2022. [Read More](#)

Alzheimer's Test Provides Much Needed Answers to Patients and Their Families

Brain Canada



A new test will help patients find the answers they are seeking and assist their families in planning in the face of an Alzheimer's diagnosis. "This is an urgent and rapidly growing health care issue," says Dr. Mari DeMarco (pictured), a Clinical Chemist at St. Paul's Hospital and a Clinical Associate Professor at UBC. Her team developed a key component of the Alzheimer's disease biomarker test. [Read More](#)

Variational AI Partners with the University of British Columbia and adMare BioInnovations to Develop COVID-19 Therapeutic

Variational AI



Variational AI, a developer of AI technology to accelerate the discovery of novel and optimized small molecule therapeutics, has announced the company has generated and ordered compounds for validation in partnership with UBC and adMare BioInnovations to develop a novel SARS-CoV-2 main protease inhibitor. The therapeutic is intended to be efficacious against the wild type and current variants of concern in the form of an antiviral pill. [Read More](#)

20 Questions with Connie Eaves

Stem Cell Network



Dr. Connie Eaves (pictured) and her team are investigating two different organ systems. In both cases, they want to understand how the cells within them are normally produced throughout life and the nature of the changes they undergo to become malignant. One is the system that makes blood cells and leukemia. The other is the mammary gland that is located inside the breast and is the source of breast cancer. [Read More](#)

GenXys Inks Deal with Precision Genetics for Personalized Medicine Tailored Treatments Using a Multifactorial, Comprehensive Prescribing Solution to Prevent Adverse Drug Reactions and Improve Outcomes

GenXys Health Care Systems



GenXys Health Care Systems is adding a new value dimension to Precision Genetics and the personalized health marketplace. Precision Genetics will use GenXys's award-winning suite of software solutions, IdentifyPGx™, TreatGx™, and ReviewGx™ to embed pharmacogenetics and offer an improved and transformative approach to precision prescribing. [Read More](#)

Stopping the Cycle: Combination Therapy Reduces Growth of Androgen-Receptor Positive Breast and Prostate Cancers

Canada's Michael Smith Genome Sciences Centre



For difficult-to-treat cancers, like androgen receptor-positive prostate cancer that does not respond to anti-androgen therapy, combination therapy is required. A new study from Drs. Marianne Sadar (pictured) and Amy Tien at the Genome Sciences Centre examined the *in vivo* response to treatment with both a cyclin-dependent kinase inhibitor and a drug that binds to the N-terminal domain of androgen receptors. [Read More](#)

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Upcoming Events in Vancouver

- January 10 9:30 AM Pathways to Impact: Translating Innovation and Venture-Building Online
- January 11 10:00 AM Gairdner Webinar: Gut Peptides Drive Therapeutic Innovation Online
- January 12 10:00 AM MSL Seminar Series: January – Invited Speaker, Dr. Jilie Chai Online
- January 17 9:00 AM SciCats Workshop Series Part 2: Communicating Your Science through Podcasting Interviews Online
- January 17 12:00 PM Putting Cancer in Its Place Vancouver General Hospital Research Pavilion

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