

# CIHR Institute of Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis

## Young Investigators Forum Report 2015



Delta Lodge at Kananaskis  
October 22 – 23, 2015  
Kananaskis, Alberta, Canada



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## Executive Summary

The Young Investigators (YI) Forum is a major training and educational initiative of Canadian Institutes of Health Research's (CIHR) Institute of Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis (IMHA). This year's forum aimed to bring YIs together to interact with one another, learn about upcoming CIHR initiatives, and attend workshops. The goal of this forum was to offer YIs in the research areas of arthritis, skin, muscle, bone, MSK rehabilitation, and oral health some of the tools that will be helpful in preparing for and being successful in CIHR grant competitions as well as giving them a 'home' in the IMHA research community.

Patients and patient advocates were involved throughout this forum, with two patient members of CIHR – IMHA's Advisory Board taking part in the forum's welcome along with Scientific Director, Dr. Hani El-Gabalawy.

The first session oriented YIs with regards to CIHR reforms as presented by Dr. El-Gabalawy, followed by an informative talk by Dr. Kate Lee, Vice President of Research and Career Development at The Arthritis Society about the possibilities of forming partnerships with organizations like hers.

Separate workshops on writing successful grant applications were tailored for biomedical researchers and clinical/Health System Services/Population and Public Health researchers, and delivered by Drs. Marc Pouliot and Joy MacDermid respectively.

The YIs were then invited to join in the AAC symposium on ***New Directions in Osteoarthritis Research*** for the afternoon sessions, which featured talks and discussions on patient engagement and knowledge translation.

The forum's second day began a keynote address from Dr. Jean Rouleau, Scientific Director of the CIHR Institute of Circulatory and Respiratory Health, who, as a researcher, had had many years of mentoring new scientists and students in their careers. Key advice he gave was to be focused and become experts in an area to which they can make the most contributions and be sought out as a respected researcher in that area.

A session on patient engagement was designed to stimulate an open mic discussion of best practices for YIs to involve patients in all levels of research. The panel comprised of patient advocates and encouraged YIs to involve patients at the outset in research priority setting, in governance, in project design and knowledge translation and implementation.

Three simultaneous breakout sessions engaged smaller groups of YIs in discussion with mentors who were experts on the subjects of 1) How to successfully build a multi-disciplinary team, 2) How to reinvent your career in today's changing job climate, and 3) How to establish a publication record.

Finally, YIs had an opportunity to network with trainees from The Arthritis Society (TAS) and AAC meeting participants.

## **Background**

The YI Forum 2015 was the second offered by CIHR – IMHA. The first took place June 11 and 12, 2012 in Toronto, and was a major initiative to convene young researchers from all of CIHR – IMHA’s focus areas to network, attend workshops and come away with new knowledge and relationships to build capacity in the institute’s stakeholder community. At that inaugural conference, CIHR – IMHA aimed to bring its research community together around the cross-cutting themes of its then-strategic plan: Tissue Injury, Repair and Replacement; Pain, Disability and Chronic Disease, and Physical Activity, Mobility and Health. Since the launch of CIHR – IMHA’s 2014 - 2018 strategic plan which sets out new strategic priority areas of Chronic Pain and Fatigue; Inflammation and Tissue Repair; and Disability, Mobility and Health, along with an acknowledged need for researchers to conduct multidisciplinary research, it became clear that it was time to hold another YI forum.

## **Forum Overview**

The latest forum took place at the Delta Lodge at Kananaskis on October 22 and 23, 2015 and was planned to coincide with the Arthritis Alliance of Canada’s (AAC) annual meeting that featured a symposium with the theme: “New Directions in Osteoarthritis Research” and a gala tribute dinner in the honour of “Dr. Cy Frank and The Rocky Mountain Pioneers.” The late Dr. Frank was the inaugural scientific director of CIHR – IMHA, and the institute deemed it valuable for forum participants to experience part of the AAC activities. As with the 2012 Forum, this year’s event was a major training and educational initiative aimed at bringing together young investigators (defined as researchers no more than five years into their academic careers) from all the Institute’s focus areas to interact, learn about CIHR initiatives, and attend workshops important for career development and related skills. About 80 YIs from across Canada took part in the forum, including a poster ‘mixer’ where they each presented findings from their scientific research. The poster mixer offered opportunities for the YIs to network with each other and with other community stakeholders attending the AAC symposium.

## **DAY ONE**

### **Welcoming Remarks**

The first day began with opening remarks from CIHR – IMHA’s Scientific Director, Dr. Hani El-Gabalawy, followed by patient representatives Alan Stordy and Dawn Richards. Both have served as Institute Advisory Board Members, and both are patients living with chronic conditions falling under CIHR – IMHA’s areas of research focus. Their remarks served to remind forum participants of the importance of patient engagement in research and of translating knowledge discovered in such a way as to be accessible to patient end-users of research.

### **Day 1 - Forum Presentations**

Dr. El-Gabalawy gave a presentation on the latest reforms at CIHR. Throughout the presentation, he fielded many questions from YIs. Of particular interest was how funds would be allocated through the

new Project scheme and Foundation scheme, and concerns regarding the peer review process. Questions came from researchers in all areas of CIHR – IMHA’s mandate, and from all pillars from basic scientists to clinicians to Health Systems and Services researchers.

Dr. Kate Lee, Vice President of Research and Career Development at The Arthritis Society, encouraged participants to consider organizations such as hers when looking for funding opportunities and partners. Her talk focused on “Thinking Outside the CIHR Box: Exploring other grant and funding opportunities.”



*Dr. Hani El-Gabalawy addresses Young Investigators on CIHR reforms.*

## **Day 1 - Workshops: How to Write Grants in the New World/Vision**

Two concurrent workshops on grant writing were presented by two experienced researchers and Institute Advisory Board members, Drs. Marc Pouliot and Joy MacDermid. Dr. Pouliot spoke to participants engaged in basic science research, while Dr. MacDermid tailored her presentation to participants of pillars three and four backgrounds: clinician-researchers, population and public health. Key information both shared with participants included discussion of the new Project and Foundation grant schemes offered by CIHR and the new peer review process.

### ***Biomedical***

Dr. Pouliot is a member of the CIHR – IMHA advisory board and is an active biomedical researcher and Full Professor of Infectious Diseases and Immunology at Laval University. With his experience and background, he advised YIs to pay attention to standards of tenure and encouraged them to apply to Project scheme grants if rules of tenure apply to their university institutions. He encouraged them to lobby their respective universities to review criteria for tenure and emphasized the need to be part of a larger research team rather than being a stand-alone researcher as historically required by universities. Being a part of a team is important, while at the same time establishing oneself as being the best in one’s own field and therefore the best in that area for the team. He recommended finding out from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) and CIHR that they need to justify funding and renewal of funding and what they consider to be unique research. Dr. Pouliot stressed the importance of being able to write lay language summaries, and advised that researchers should write applications they are certain they can deliver on, ones that are reasonable and realistic. Writing tips

included getting the subject matter down, getting it right and making it enjoyable and understandable for reviewers to read.

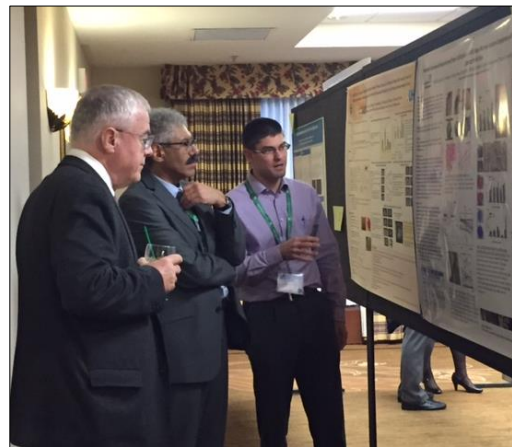
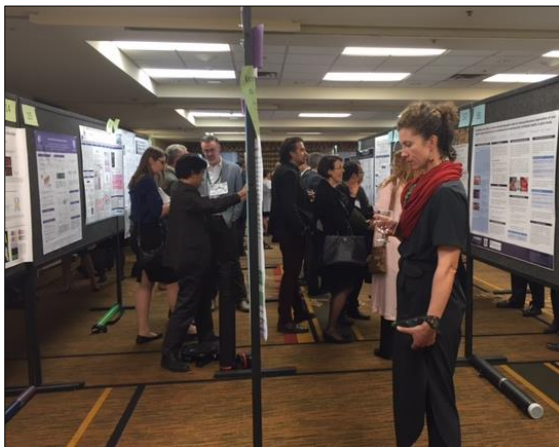
### ***Clinical/Health Services/Population Health***

Dr. MacDermid is a Professor at Western University's School of Physical Therapy and at McMaster University's School of Rehabilitation Science. She is a clinician-researcher with methodology expertise in measurement, knowledge translation, clinical trials, clinical practice guidelines and more. She emphasized to the YIS, the importance of reading application instructions and advised on which schemes were best to apply to for which circumstances: Foundation versus Project scheme. She reminded YIs to consider alternative sources of research funding such as provincial agencies, universities, health agencies, professional associations, charitable agencies and industry. As well, she provided a list of CIHR evaluation criteria for grant applications, advised on good practices for writing grant applications, and listed common application failures. Importantly, she reminded researchers to read and apply CIHR's sex and gender document and to remember to include consideration of sex and gender in their research project design, and advised on having a plan for knowledge translation of research in place.

### **Day 1 - AAC Symposium**

As part of the CIHR – IMHA partnership with the Arthritis Alliance of Canada (AAC), the YIs were invited to take part in the AAC Research Symposium's two afternoon sessions on ***New Directions in Osteoarthritis Research*** and Gala Tribute Dinner in honour of CIHR – IMHA's inaugural Scientific Director, Dr. Cy Frank, who was a renowned clinician-scientist and expert in the field of osteoarthritis (OA). Key themes of the afternoon sessions were patient engagement in research, knowledge translation, and the need to identify, prioritize and address gaps in OA research.

Young Investigator poster viewing took place at the end of the day during and in conjunction with the AAC pre-gala dinner cocktail reception. Trainees invited by The Arthritis Society and Arthritis Consumer Organizations in Canada also presented posters at the same time.



*The Young Investigators' posters were on display during the Arthritis Alliance of Canada reception.*

## DAY TWO

### Overview and Keynote Speaker

Dr. El-Gabalawy introduced the YI Forum Keynote Speaker, Dr. Jean Rouleau, who was the Scientific Director of the CIHR Institute of Circulatory and Respiratory Health. Dr. Rouleau has a lifetime of experience in mentoring young investigator and had worked with Dr. Cy Frank on the education of new generations of researchers.

Dr. Rouleau advised YIs that while joining teams and working well with others is important, they must be respectful but active in staking out their own territory. He advised that Canada is bountiful in cohorts that could greatly assist new researchers in becoming experts in particular fields and encouraged them to seek out mentors/senior researchers to support their proposals.

Key barriers to early career success, he noted, are salary support, start-up funds, and the lack of bridge funding for grants. A lack of structured mentoring is a concern in the current training and mentoring landscape. However, emerging networks and community development networks are necessary to develop strategic priorities to help train researchers and enhance capacity and competitiveness.

Key advice included to develop a clear career path by getting frequent feedback. Dr. Rouleau advised that it is important to protect one's time and remain focused, while maintaining a work-life balance.

### Day 2 – Forum Presentations

#### ***Changing the Culture of Research: Patient Engagement session***

In the plenary session, Dr. El-Gabalawy addressed the YIs about CIHR's citizen and patient engagement strategy, which seeks to include vulnerable citizens including indigenous and immigrant populations. Patient engagement collaboration grants are one resource for researchers to tap into through the CIHR Strategy for Patient Oriented Research (SPOR). Dr. El-Gabalawy concluded by describing CIHR – IMHA's patient engagement activities which include the Research Ambassadors, the James Lind Alliance priority setting partnership in adult fibromyalgia, partnerships with organizations like the Arthritis Alliance of Canada, and taking a leadership role within CIHR to develop a patient engagement curriculum.

**Mr. Allan Stordy**, a former member of the CIHR – IMHA Advisory Board and a patient advocate involved with the Canadian Skin Patient Alliance (CSPA), shared his story of how he developed and came to live with a chronic skin condition. He wanted the YIs to understand who the patients are, and that they have a great deal to offer researchers. What he has learned from working with researchers is to be themselves; that it is important for patients to know who they are as people to help build trust. He suggested that applying for grants was no different from approaching business investors and that where patients are approachable, researchers should also be. He reminded the YIs that not all patients are the same and that researchers can learn from them. He encouraged YIs to be open to involving patients in all aspects of their research, even on a biomedical level.

**Dr. Dawn Richards**, a member of CIHR – IMHA’s Advisory Board, described to the YIs what it is like to live with a chronic illness and to recognize that being a patient is not all that patients are. Patients want to be involved but do not always know how, she attested, and invited the YIs to treat patients as they would any other collaborator. As an action item, she encouraged all YIs to take away from this forum, a plan as to how they will engage a patient in their work, and to avoid tokenism, as patients can see through it and would prefer that their contributions be genuinely appreciated and put to good use.

Dr. Rouleau joined Mr. Stordy and Dr. Richards for a panel discussion and open mic, facilitated by Dr. El-Gabalawy. The first question was on how to engage patients in basic biomedical research. Dr. Richards suggested starting with introducing YIs to patients at workshops because they are less set in their ways as to the roles of researchers versus patients. Mr. Stordy suggested setting priorities with patient input first, to engage them in discussion of where funding for research should go. Dr. Rouleau advised that he would engage patients on four levels:

- 1) Identifying priorities as per the James Lind Alliance method;
- 2) Governance, involving a patient on the research team, for example, in the executive committee for trials;
- 3) Training of researchers about where patients could be involved;
- 4) Involving a patient in their care as a partner to help identify best practices

Dr. El-Gabalawy suggested encouraging researchers to explain their research in lay language summaries for patients, and also to involve patients in clinical protocols on the ethics of human clinical trials.

Giving feedback and educating both patients and researchers about each other’s needs and expectations was a common theme throughout the discussion. Using plain language and finding individual patients who have a lot of skills to contribute are important aspects to consider when engaging patients. When concern about engaging patients in research priority-setting was expressed, Dr. El-Gabalawy advised that there are certain types of research that a patient’s perspective and expertise is imperative for the researcher. Finally, one YI shared a story of having talked to a patient at her poster for a long time the previous day, and that she concluded that she would like to invite patients into her lab to talk to her students.

## **Day 2 – Breakout Sessions**

Three breakout sessions were organized to cover three different topics that were of interest to YIs. Because time was insufficient to run the sessions several times to enable all YIs to attend each session, the three groups reconvened in the same room after their respective sessions and shared summary notes on key points that arose from each discussion.

### ***How to successfully build a multi-disciplinary team (Dr. Claire Bombardier)***

Dr. Claire Bombardier is Director of Rheumatology for the University of Toronto, a Senior Scientist for the Toronto General Research Institute, and was formerly the Co-Scientific Director at the Canadian Arthritis Network (CAN). As such, she was able to share her experiences creating and building a national network that brought together a multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary research community. Dr. Bombardier advised YIs that when beginning a research project, they should look at the data available outside one’s



immediate area, such as open access clinical and administrative databases, and build from there. Recruitment of a team should be an ongoing process. She emphasized the importance of knowing one's team, including being aware of what motivates them, and be prepared to provide them with opportunities for advancement at appropriate times. Checking in with staff regularly to see what their needs for skill building are is important, as is being aware of what team members are doing. From experience, she learned that some individuals may have different agendas that may detract from the goals of the project, therefore as the project lead, it is important to take the time to be aware of what staff are doing. Look to the private sector for mentorship, and have more than one mentor or role model inside and outside one's organization. Having a personal mentor is helpful to achieve a better work-life balance. Dr. Bombardier warned against becoming 'overscheduled and undereducated' to the point where one forgets there is a life outside of work. Finally, she advised that YIs keep an eye on the ever-changing research landscape, plan for the future, and make sure that what they are doing does not become obsolete.

### ***How to reinvent your career in today's changing job climate (Dr. Dawn Richards)***

Dr. Richards shared her experience of making choices all along her career path from grad school to industry, and then facing the need to reinvent her career when personal health issues arose. Through constant networking and taking some risks for high rewards, she developed many skills that helped her to be diverse and highly employable. By using her scientific training combined with project management, grant and manuscript writing skills, patient engagement experience, patient-related work with industry and charity organizations and partnering with other consultants like herself, she has been able to build a dynamic career. Some key words of advice Dr. Richards offered to YIs were to network, not be afraid to ask (the worst someone can say is 'no'), don't burn bridges, follow your intuition, don't worry about what others think, and find something you love and stick to it. Also, she advised being one's own advocate and paying attention to the business side of a career as it is also important.

### ***How to establish a publication record (Drs. Hani El – Gabalawy and Jean Rouleau)***

Drs. El-Gabalawy and Rouleau have both published their respective research prolifically, and together, shared a wealth of information about their publishing careers with this breakout group of YIs. Important key points that arose in discussion included the following:

**Carve your niche:** Think about what key contributions you can make and become known as an expert.

**Write well:** Make sure that what you submit for publication is well written and not a draft. As members of the editorial boards for peer reviewed journals, Drs. El-Gabalawy and Rouleau reported having seen papers that consisted of excellent research but were so poorly written that they could not be published;

**Focus:** This applies to individual papers as well as one's career path in general. Research papers must be focused: those that are too broad will not contribute anything to the research in that field. Likewise, YIs should find a focus for their careers and become known as the one expert in that area.

**Clarify authorship:** Issues of authorship should be dealt with at the outset of a research project and should be revisited on an ongoing basis while the research is being carried out. This will ensure all contributors are clear of where and how they will be credited. Further, the positioning of authorship on

a publication is important as it indicates the Principal Investigator and reveals who else made the most contributions. Dr. Rouleau advised YIs to be generous to their students with inclusion in authorship because he warned, “you will be judged on the success of your students.”

**Ensure quality research:** The last thing a researcher wants is to have to publish a retraction, so they should make sure they have done a thorough job writing the paper before submission. Dr. Rouleau advised having the whole paper written before submitting an abstract, and once a researcher has enough material to write an abstract, the paper should be written immediately to avoid someone else publishing similar work. Both speakers emphasized quality over quantity as a best practice.

## **Day 2 – Closing Remarks and Poster Mixer**

Dr. El-Gabalawy thanked the YIs for coming and encouraged them to take away what they learned to apply to their ongoing career paths. The day concluded with a Poster Mixer as an opportunity for The Arthritis Society trainees and CIHR – IMHA’s YIs to network with each other and attendees of the AAC symposium.

## Appendix 1: Forum Agenda

### Program

**DAY ONE, Thursday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015**

| Time              | Session   | Speakers  |
|-------------------|---|---|
| <b>7:00 a.m.</b>  | <b>Breakfast</b> ( <i>Explorer Room</i> )   |   |
| <b>8:00 a.m.</b>  | <b>Welcome</b> ( <i>Explorer Room</i> )   | Hani El-Gabalawy,<br>Scientific Director, IMHA<br>Allan Stordy and Dawn<br>Richards, Patient<br>Representatives |
| <b>8:10 a.m.</b>  | <b>Changing Times: CIHR Reforms</b>   | Hani El-Gabalawy  |
| <b>9:20 a.m.</b>  | <b>Thinking Outside the CIHR Box:<br/>Exploring other grant and funding opportunities</b><br><i>The Arthritis Society (TAS)</i><br><br><i>NSERC</i> | Kate Lee,<br>Executive Director, TAS<br><br>Frank Nolan,<br>Research and Innovation<br>Development Officer      |
| <b>9:50 a.m.</b>  | <b>Question and Answer</b>  | Hani El-Gabalawy  |
| <b>10:20 a.m.</b> | <b>Health Break</b>   |   |
| <b>10:40 a.m.</b> | <b>How to Write Grants in the New World/Vision</b>  | Marc Pouliot<br>Joy MacDermid   |
| <b>11:45 a.m.</b> | <b>Lunch / Networking</b> ( <i>Rockies Room</i> )   |   |
| <b>12:45 p.m.</b> | <b>AAC Symposium: “New Directions in Osteoarthritis Research”</b><br>See AAC Program for Details. ( <i>Olympic Ballroom</i> )                       |   |
| <b>5:00 p.m.</b>  | <b>AAC – Research Symposium Adjourns for the Day</b>  |   |
| <b>6:15 p.m.</b>  | <b>AAC Cocktail Reception</b> ( <i>Explorer Room</i> )  |   |
| <b>6:45 p.m.</b>  | <b>AAC Gala Tribute Dinner</b> ( <i>Olympic Ballroom</i> )<br>“Dr. Cy Frank and The Rocky Mountain Pioneers”  |   |





# Program

**DAY TWO, Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015**

| Time                         | Session   | Speakers   |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>7:15 a.m.</b>             | <b>Breakfast</b> ( <i>Olympic Ballroom - Silver and Bronze</i> )                      |  |
| <b>8:00 a.m.</b>             | <b>Overview Day Two</b><br>( <i>Olympic Ballroom - Silver and Bronze</i> )            | Hani El-Gabalawy   |
| <b>8:10 a.m.</b>             | <b>Keynote Speaker</b>  | Jean Rouleau   |
| <b>9:10 a.m.</b>             | <b>Changing the Culture of Research:<br/>Patient Engagement session</b>               | Hani El-Gabalawy<br>Dawn Richards<br>Stephen Robbins<br>Jean Rouleau<br>Allan Stordy |
| <b>10:15 a.m.</b>            | <b>Health Break</b>   |  |
| <b>10:30 a.m.</b>            | <b>Breakout Sessions</b><br>( <i>Olympic Ballroom - Silver, Bronze, Walker Room</i> ) |  |
|                              | 1. How to successfully build a multi-disciplinary team.                               | Claire Bombardier  |
|                              | 2. How to reinvent your career in today's changing job climate.                       | Dawn Richards  |
|                              | 3. How to establish a publication record.   | Hani El-Gabalawy and Jean Rouleau  |
| <b>11:30 a.m.</b>            | <b>Breakout Sessions Report Back</b> ( <i>Olympic Ballroom</i> )                      |  |
| <b>12:00 noon</b>            | <b>Closing Remarks</b>  | Hani El-Gabalawy   |
| <b>12:05 noon</b>            | <b>Check-out and Lunch</b>  |  |
| <b>1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.</b> | <b>Poster Mixer</b> ( <i>Explorer Room</i> )  |  |

**3:00 p.m. Board Shuttles to Airport**




 Canadian Institutes of Health Research
 
 Instituts de recherche en santé du Canada

**Canada** 

## Appendix 2: List of Participants

### Participant List



|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| ADESIDA, Adetola B<br>Associate Professor<br>University of Alberta<br>adesida@ualberta.ca              | CLARK, Andrea L<br>Assistant Professor<br>University of Calgary<br>alclark@uoguelph.ca  | FAIT, Philippe<br>Assistant Professor<br>Université du Québec à Trois Rivières<br>philippe.fait@uqtf.ca                   |
| ALHUSAYEN, Raed<br>Assistant Professor<br>University of Toronto<br>raed.alhusayen@sunnybrook.ca        | COLMEGNA, Ines<br>Research Institute of the<br>McGill University Health Centre<br>ines.colmegna@mcgill.ca                     | FERNANDEZ-GONZALEZ, Rodrigo<br>Assistant Professor<br>University of Toronto<br>rodrigo.fernandez.gonzalez@utoronto.ca     |
| ARDELEAN, Daniela<br>Assistant Professor<br>University of Toronto<br>daniela.ardelean@mail.utoronto.ca | CULLEN, Kim<br>Research Associate<br>Institute for Work and Health<br>kcullen@iwh.on.ca                                       | FERRON, Mathieu<br>Principal Investigator<br>Institut de recherches cliniques de<br>Montréal<br>mathieu.ferron@ircm.qc.ca |
| AVIVI-ARBER, Limor<br>Assistant Professor<br>University of Toronto<br>limor.avivi.arber@utoronto.ca    | DALE, Craig<br>Assistant Professor<br>University of Toronto<br>craig.dale@utoronto.ca   | FORTIN, Carole<br>Assistant Professor<br>Hôpital Sainte-Justine (Montréal)<br>carole.fortin@umontreal.ca                  |
| BARNABE, Cheryl<br>Assistant Professor<br>University of Calgary<br>ccbarnab@ucalgary.ca                | DE CARVALHO, Diana<br>Assistant Professor<br>Memorial University of<br>Newfoundland<br>ddecarvalho@mun.ca                     | FRENCH, Simon D<br>Assistant Professor<br>Queen's University<br>simon.french@queensu.ca                                   |
| BATH, Brenna<br>Assistant Professor<br>University of Saskatchewan<br>brenna.bath@usask.ca              | DESMEULES, François<br>Investigator<br>Hôpital Maisonneuve-Rosemont<br>(Montréal)<br>f.desmeules@umontreal.ca                 | GAUVIN-LEPAGE, Jérôme<br>Assistant Professor<br>University of Montreal<br>jerome.gauvin-lepage@umontreal.ca               |
| BOMBARDIER, Claire<br>Senior Scientist<br>University of Toronto<br>claire.bombardier@utoronto.ca       | DRUCKER, Aaron<br>Clinical Assistant<br>Brown University<br>aaron_drucker@brown.edu   | GILBERT, Penney M<br>Assistant Professor<br>University of Toronto<br>penney.gilbert@utoronto.ca                           |
| CAMPBELL, Mark<br>Assistant Professor<br>University of Ottawa<br>campbetm@hotmail.com                  | EAMES, Brian F<br>Assistant Professor<br>University of Saskatchewan<br>b.frank@usask.ca                                       | GRAHAM, Ryan<br>Assistant Professor<br>University of Ottawa<br>rgraham@uottawa.ca   |
| CARLESSO, Lisa<br>Assistant Professor<br>University of Montreal<br>lisa.carlesso@umontreal.ca          | EL-GABALAWY, Hani<br>Scientific Director<br>Institute of Musculoskeletal<br>Health & Arthritis<br>Hani.Elgabrawy@umanitoba.ca | HICAPIÉ, Cesar<br>University of Toronto and<br>University Health Network<br>cesar.hincapie@utoronto.ca                    |
| CAVALLO, Sabrina<br>University of Ottawa<br>Sabrina.cavallo@umontreal.ca                               | ERLANDSON, Marta<br>Assistant Professor<br>University of Saskatchewan<br>marta.erlandson@usask.ca                             | HUANG, Peng<br>Assistant Professor<br>University of Calgary<br>huangp@ucalgary.ca   |
| CHANDRAN, Vinod<br>Assistant Professor<br>University of Toronto<br>vchandra@uhnresearch.ca             |   | HUNT, Michael A<br>Associate Professor<br>University of British Columbia<br>michael.hunt@ubc.ca                           |

# Participant List



CIHR IRSC  
Canadian Institutes of Health Research / Institut de recherche en santé du Canada

IVANOVA, Iordanka (Dany)  
Research Scientist  
University of Western Ontario  
iivanov3@uwo.ca

MALY, Monica  
Associate Professor  
McMaster University  
mmaly@mcmaster.ca

PEELER, Jason D  
Associate Professor  
University of Manitoba  
jason.peeler@umanitoba.ca

JETHA, Arif  
Mustard Fellow  
Institute for Work and Health  
ajetha@iwh.on.ca

MARSH, Jackie  
Post Doctoral Fellow  
University of Western Ontario  
Jackie.Marsh@lhsc.on.ca; jmarsh2@uwo.ca

PELLETIER, Chelsea  
Assistant Professor  
University of Northern British  
Columbia  
chelsea.pelletier@unbc.ca

KALIA, Sunil  
Assistant Professor  
Vancouver Coastal  
Health Research Institute  
sunil.kalia@vch.ca

MAZUR, Christine  
Communications Project Officer  
Institute of Musculoskeletal  
Health & Arthritis  
christine.mazur@umanitoba.ca

PELLETIER, Martin  
Assistant Professor  
Centre hospitalier de l'Université Laval  
martin.pelletier@crchudequebec.ulaval.ca

KANNU, Peter  
Assistant Professor  
University of Toronto  
peter.kannu@sickkids.ca

MELKUS, Gerd E  
Clinician Investigator  
Ottawa Hospital General Campus  
gerd.melkus@gmail.com

PELLING, Andrew E  
Associate Professor  
University of Ottawa  
a@pellinglab.net

KIN ON WONG, Andy  
Co-Director CaMos BQS  
University Health Network  
andykowong@gmail.com

MOOKHERJEE, Neeloffer  
Associate Professor  
University of Manitoba  
Neeloffer.Mookherjee@med.umanitoba.ca

PENUELA, Silvia  
Assistant Professor  
University of Western Ontario  
spenuela@uwo.ca

KOCH, Thomas  
Assistant Professor  
Ontario Veterinary College  
tkoch@uoguelph.ca

NAM, Diane  
Associate Scientist  
Sunnybrook Research Institute  
diane.nam@sunnybrook.ca

PERREAU, Kadija  
Assistant Professor  
Université de Montréal  
kadija.perreault@fmed.ulaval.ca

KULIC, Dana  
Associate Professor  
University of Waterloo  
dkulic@ece.uwaterloo.ca

NIMMON, Laura  
Assistant Professor  
University of British Columbia  
laura.nimmon@ubc.ca

PERRUCCIO, Anthony  
Assistant Professor  
Toronto Western Research Institute  
perrucci@uhnres.utoronto.ca

LEE, Kate  
Vice President, Research and  
Career Development  
The Arthritis Society  
info@arthritis.ca

NOVAK, Christine B  
Scientist  
Toronto Rehabilitation Institute  
christine.novak@utoronto.ca

PERRY, Christopher  
Assistant Professor  
York University  
cperry@yorku.ca

LITVINOV, Ivan  
Assistant Professor  
University of Ottawa  
ivan.litvinov@mail.mcgill.ca

PACI, Irina  
Associate Professor  
University of Victoria  
ipaci@uvic.ca

POITRAS, Stéphane  
Associate Professor  
Ottawa Hospital General Campus  
stephane.poitras@uottawa.ca

MACDERMID, Joy  
Professor  
University of Western Ontario  
jmacderm@uwo.ca

PARSONS, Joanne  
Assistant Professor  
University of Manitoba  
joanne.parsons@umanitoba.ca

POULIOT, Marc  
Professor  
Laval University  
marc.pouliot@crchul.ulaval.ca

MACKEY, Dawn  
Assistant Professor  
Simon Fraser University  
dmackey@sfu.ca

PASSMORE, Steven R  
Assistant Professor  
University of Manitoba  
Steven.Passmore@umanitoba.ca

RAINBOW, Michael  
Assistant Professor  
Queen's University  
michael.rainbow@queensu.ca



# Participant List



RICHARDS, Dawn  
Consultant and Vice President  
Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance  
dawn.p.richards@gmail.com

ROBBINS, Shawn M  
Assistant Professor  
McGill University  
shawn.robbins@mcgill.ca

ROBBINS, Stephen  
Scientific Director  
Institute of Cancer Research  
srobbins@ucalgary.ca

ROBSON, Elizabeth  
Secretary to Institute Advisory Board  
Institute of Musculoskeletal  
Health & Arthritis  
elizabeth.robson@umanitoba.ca

ROULEAU, Jean L.  
Scientific Director  
Institute of Circulatory and  
Respiratory Health  
jean.rouleau@umontreal.ca

ROY, Jean-Sébastien  
Associate Professor  
Centre for Interdisciplinary Res. in  
Rehabilitation & Social Integration  
jean-sebastien.roy@rea.ulaval.ca

RUSHTON, Paula  
Assistant Professor  
Université de Montréal  
Paula.rushton@umontreal.ca

SACCO, Sandra  
Brock University  
ssacco@brocku.ca

SCHACTER, Isanne  
University of Manitoba  
isanne.schacter@gmail.com

SCHNEIDER, Prism  
Clinical Assistant Professor  
University of Calgary  
prism.schneider@gmail.com

SIQUEIRA, Walter L  
CIHR New Investigator  
University of Western Ontario  
walter.siqueira@uwo.ca

SOLEIMANI, Vahab D  
Assistant Professor  
Jewish General Hospital  
vahab.soleimani@mcgill.ca

STORDY, Allan  
President & CEO  
Arete HR Inc  
astordy@aretehr.com

SZAJCZ-KELLER, Nicole  
Assistant Director  
Institute of Musculoskeletal  
Health & Arthritis  
nicole.szajcz-keller@umanitoba.ca

TAMIMI, Faleh  
Assistant Professor  
McGill University  
faleh.tamimimarino@mcgill.ca

TEETER, Matthew Glenn  
Assistant Professor  
University of Western Ontario  
Matthew.Teeter@lhsc.on.ca

TOMKINS-LANE, Christy  
Associate Professor  
Mount Royal University  
clane@mtroyal.ca

TOUMA, Zahi  
Assistant Professor  
University Health Network  
ztouma@uhnresearch.ca

TOUPIN APRIL, Karine  
Associate Scientist  
Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario  
ktoupin@cheo.on.ca

TRASK, Catherine  
Assistant Professor  
University of Saskatchewan  
cmt520@mail.usask.ca

VIOLI, Michelina  
Project and Finance Officer  
Institute of Musculoskeletal  
Health & Arthritis  
michelina.violi@umanitoba.ca

VORONOV, Irina  
Assistant Professor  
University of Toronto  
irina.voronov@utoronto.ca

WALSH, Kate  
Administrative Clerk  
Institute of Musculoskeletal  
Health & Arthritis  
Kate.walsh@umanitoba.ca

WALTON, David M  
Assistant Professor  
University of Western Ontario  
dwalt5@uwo.ca

WARMAN, Jodi  
Assistant Professor  
University of Ottawa  
jwarman@toh.on.ca

WAUGH, Charlotte  
Marie Curie Actions Research Fellow  
University of British Columbia  
charlotte.waugh@hiphealth.ca

WEST, Sarah  
Post-doctoral Research Fellow  
University of Toronto  
sarah.west@mail.utoronto.ca

WHITTAKER, Jackie  
Assistant Professor  
University of Alberta  
jwhittak@ualberta.ca

WIDEMAN, Timothy  
Assistant Professor  
McGill University  
timothy.wideman@mcgill.ca

WILLETT, Thomas  
Assistant Professor  
University of Waterloo  
thomas.willett@uwaterloo.ca

YOKOTA, Toshifumi  
Assistant Professor  
University of Alberta  
toshifum@ualberta.ca

ZHAI, Guangju  
Associate Professor  
Memorial University of  
Newfoundland  
guangju.zhai@med.mun.ca

**Appendix 3:**  
**CIHR Staff Involved in Organizing the Forum**

Dr. Hani El-Gabalawy

Christine Mazur

Nicole Szajcz-Keller

Kate Walsh

Michelina Violi