



Mycobacterium Tuberculosis

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Neglected Global Diseases Initiative



a place of mind
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Newsletter April, 2014

NGDI Member News

NGDI Member Steve Withers wins Killam Research Fellowship

Two NGDI Members Garner Grand Challenges Scale-Up Grants (Drs. Rich Lester and Mark Ansermino)

Dr. Jerry Spiegel won Cortland JG McKenzie Teaching Prize

Dr. Robert Hancock featured on CBC's Quirks and Quarks

Funding Opportunities

Peter Wall Institute – Call for Proposals

Global Health Research Institute – IDRC Innovating for Maternal & Child Health in Africa Call

CIHR Team Grant Deadlines

Upcoming Conferences and Events

International Society for Neglected Diseases

5th Annual CUGH Global Health Conference

Rudolf Vrba Memorial Lecture 2014

Wall Exchange Spring 2014 – Stephen Lewis

Students without Borders internship information

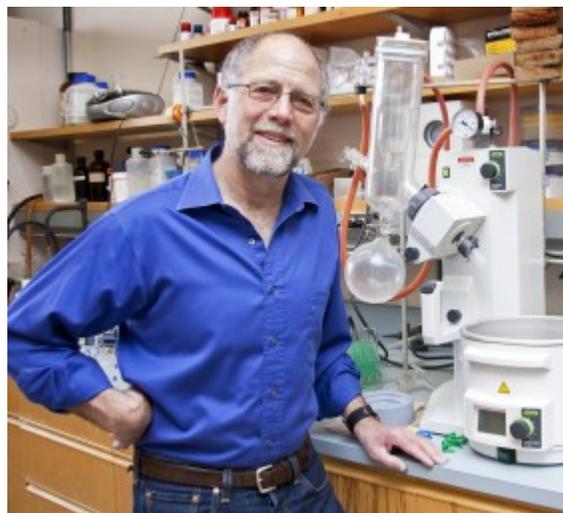
Reports of Interest

Accelerating R&D for Neglected Diseases through Collaboration

NGDI Member Steve Withers wins Killam Research Fellowship

UBC chemist **Stephen Withers** is one of five successful applicants to receive the Killam Research Fellowships. Dr. Withers's research is in emerging field of engineering carbohydrate-modifying enzymes. He proposes a creative and original approach in his project, *Development and use of ultra-high-throughput screens for directed evolution and metagenomics*. He will go beyond the engineering of known enzymes and develop techniques that will enable the discovery of unknown enzymes for their subsequent modification. The products deriving from this project will have the potential for industrial application in disease fighting therapeutics.

For more information on the Killam Awards, click [here](#).



Department of Chemistry
Faculty of Science

Two NGDI Members Garner Grand Challenges Scale-Up Grants

Dr. Richard Lester (WelTel) and Dr. Mark Ansermino (LionsGate Technologies)

Rich Lester's [WelTel Project](#) will scale up in partnership with African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF).

UBC-VCH Research Team Steering \$2 Million Mobile Health Program in Africa

A University of British Columbia and Vancouver Coastal Health research team using cell phones to improve HIV patient care in Africa has secured a \$2 million investment to expand their mobile health (mHealth) program across rural Kenya.

Continued next page.

Mark Ansermino Innovative Phone Oximeter (TM) Receives \$2M Funding Boost

Smartphone app reads blood oxygen levels, capitalized with new \$2 million Canadian private-public investment.

Private and public investors are injecting \$2 million into a Canadian mobile health innovation that offers hope of preventing thousands of deaths and improving the health of expectant mothers, newborns and children throughout the developing world.

Continued next page.



Dr. Rich Lester cont'd here.

The funds are the result of a partnership between the non-profit WelTel and the African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF), with the support of Grand Challenges Canada. Funded by the Government of Canada, Grand Challenges Canada supports bold ideas with big impact in global health and offers financial support and leadership for the scaling of promising and sustainable innovations. Grand Challenges Canada's \$1 million contribution was matched by AMREF.

"Cell phones are everywhere in Africa and usage costs are very low," says Dr. Richard Lester, founder and director of the project. "This makes them a great tool for patient care in a resource limited setting like rural Kenya".

Dr. Lester, faculty in the Department of Medicine at UBC, conducted a clinical trial in collaboration with the University of Manitoba and University of Nairobi and found that a simple "how are you?" text, sent weekly to patients on anti-viral therapy for HIV allowed nurses to easily manage and follow up with a large number of patients. Patients in turn reported better support and were 12% more likely to stay on their drug therapy, which in turn led to a 9% increase in patients with full viral suppression.

"This was one of the first trials that demonstrated improved HIV treatment behaviors", says Dr. Lester. "Given the number of people living with HIV/AIDS in Africa, almost 30 million, these small but significant changes can be amplified to massive impact if brought to scale".

Soon after the results were published, Dr. Lester helped establish WelTel, a non-profit to develop and apply his mobile mHealth strategy for widespread clinical use.

To read full press release, click [here](#).



Dr. Mark Ansermino cont'd here.

LionsGate Technologies ([LGTmedical](#)), a Vancouver-based social enterprise, has secured its first major financial backers to scale up development of the Phone Oximeter™, an app and medical sensor that turns a non-specialist, community-level health worker's smartphone, tablet computer or laptop into an affordable and simple but sophisticated medical-grade diagnostic tool, which is currently typically available in the developing world only in some hospitals.

Mr. Irfhan Rajani, CEO of Vancouver-based Coleco Investments, leads a \$1 million angel investment in the device, to be matched with a \$1 million grant from Grand Challenges Canada – the first such investment under a new \$10 million strategic partnership between Grand Challenges Canada and the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada (DFATD).

"Our Government is promoting innovative approaches to addressing the world's most urgent needs in both global health and international development, including leveraging private sector investment and partnerships that focus on results," said the Honourable Christian Paradis, Canadian Minister of International Development and La Francophonie. "This newest investment is a precise fit with the Prime Minister's global commitment, through the Muskoka Initiative, to improve the health and lives of mothers and children in the world's poorest countries."

Developed by scientists Drs. Mark Ansermino, Guy Dumont and Peter von Dadelszen of the University of British Columbia, the device measures blood oxygen levels through a light sensor attached to a person's fingertip. This technique is known as pulse oximetry.

To read full press release, click [here](#).

Dr. Jerry Spiegel won Cortlandt J.G. Mackenzie Teaching Prize

Dr. Spiegel received the 2013 CJG Mackenzie Prize for Excellence in Teaching from the School of Population and Public Health. Click [here](#) for more details!

Dr. Robert Hancock featured on CBC's Quirks and Quarks

The threat of antibiotic resistance is examined by CBC's *Quirks and Quarks*. According to UBC microbiologist Bob Hancock, the overuse of antibiotics could lead to an inability in humans to fight off infection in the future.

"We're going to see the loss of premature infants because they will die of infection. We're going to see an inability to do surgery. We're going to see a restriction or inability to treat cancer," he said. "We're going to see something as simple as a cut have the potential to develop into a more deadly or life threatening infection." *Segment starts at 4:00* March 15, 2014, [here](#).

Video of Dr. Kish Wasan's talk last month at Vancouver Public Salon now available [here](#).

Funding Opportunities

Peter Wall Institute - Call for Proposals



WHERE CONVERGING MINDS FREELY EXPLORE

PETER WALL INSTITUTE

WALL SOLUTIONS INITIATIVE

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The Wall Solutions Initiative provides opportunities for University of British Columbia researchers, community organizations and other partners to work collaboratively towards solutions using innovative research approaches. We welcome projects with a transformative vision and encourage you to bring the best minds to address the problem.

Objectives

1. Research on topics of societal importance based on novel, rigorous and interdisciplinary approach
2. Partnership with end user or community partner
3. Address variety of issues, including environmental health, literacy, socialization, sustainability, health care delivery, poverty alleviation, population health & mobility, and others

Criteria

- a) Active participation from co-applicant community partner(s)
- b) Potential benefits to community
- c) Specific goals achievable within 1-3 year time frame
- d) Interdisciplinary collaboration

Letter of Intent Submit by Thursday May 1, 2014

Contact Program Manager
Wall Solutions Initiative
Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies
solutions@pwall.ubc.ca

Funding available: up to \$50,000
Stage 1 Letter of Intent **May 1**
Stage 2 Full Application **Aug 1**

Information:
www.pwall.ubc.ca

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies University of British Columbia, 6311 Crescent Road, Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z2 www.pwall.ubc.ca

The **Wall Solutions Initiative** provides opportunities for UBC researchers, community organizations and other partners to work collaboratively towards solutions using innovative research approaches.

Funding available: up to \$50,000

Stage 1: Letter of Intent May 1

Stage 2: Full Application Aug 1

For more information click [here](#).

The Innovating for Maternal and Child Health in Africa Call

Global Health Research Institute



IDRC | CRDI

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
RESEARCH CENTRE

The program:

Approximately 20 research teams, composed of leading African and Canadian researchers and African decision-makers, will develop practical solutions to health system challenges. The aim is to generate new knowledge about how interventions work, for whom, and under what conditions. Researchers will also explore how such interventions are implemented, and how they can be scaled up to improve health equity for women and children. These solutions will focus on four priority research areas:

- high-impact community based interventions: implementing and evaluating technologies and services that directly affect maternal, newborn, and child health, by working through the communities they live in
- quality facility based interventions: ensuring that high-quality health care is delivered in clinics and hospitals
- policy environments to improve health services and outcomes: working with policymakers and decision-makers to help make the best health policy decisions, and
- human resources: identifying how nurses, doctors, and other health professionals can better deliver the care that is needed.

Implementation Research Teams Call

Deadline: Tuesday, May 20, 2014 at 17:00 GMT (Greenwich Mean Time)

Geographic area:

Sub-Saharan Africa is the program's region of focus. The proposed research project must take place in at least one of the targeted countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, South Sudan, and Tanzania. (Research can also take place concurrently in other countries.)

Eligibility:

Teams must include:

- an African researcher as a principal applicant (with citizenship or permanent residency from an African country), based in an institution located in one of the targeted countries
- a Canadian researcher as a co-principal applicant based in a Canadian institution, and
- a relevant local, district, or national level decision-maker as a co-principal applicant, from the same country as the principal applicant's institution.

Project duration: 54 months

Budget and apportionment: Approximately 20 grants of a maximum of CA\$1.0 million each will be awarded.

For more information click [here](#).

CIHR Team Grants

Team Grant : Mucosal Immunology for HIV Vaccine Development – Registration Deadline June 13, 2014. Link [here](#).

Team Grant : Neuroinflammation – Application Deadline June 24, 2014. Link [here](#).

Team Grant : DSEN Collaborating Centre for Prospective Studies (2014) – Application Deadline May 23, 2014. Link [here](#).

Upcoming Conferences

The International Society for Neglected Diseases

ISNTD d3 will address the drug discovery & development equation by focusing on four sessions. Presentations & panel discussions will run from 9.00am until 5.30pm, and partnership meetings can be arranged throughout the day. Please contact adamsg@isntd.org for further details including speaking & attending and to become a conference sponsor.

Date: May 15, 2014

Location: London England, Wellcome Trust

For more information click [here](#).



5th Annual CUGH Global Health Conference

Date: May 10-12, 2014

Washington, BC, USA

For more information click [here](#).

This year's theme,

Universities 2.0 – Advancing the Global Health Agenda in the Post-MDG Era. It will showcase leading scientific advances in addressing the complex challenges we face. As the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) come to an end in 2015, we will look at the future of the global health enterprise. The program reflects this environment.

Some of the stellar speakers confirmed include President of the World Bank Jim Kim; former Head of UNAIDS and current Director of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Peter Piot; and Head of the Earth Institute at Columbia University Jeff Sachs. We also will have a special lecture by the winner of the 2014 Gairdner Awards' Global Health Awardee. The 3-day meeting will provide outstanding opportunities to learn about new scientific advances, participate in practical workshops, network, and develop new partnerships with global health leaders across disciplines.



Rudolf Vrba Memorial Lecture 2014

Speaker: Dr. Ryan J. Huxtable, Professor Emeritus, Pharmacology, University of Arizona

Title: Ethical Stories in the History of Pharmacology: European Science between the Wars

Thursday, May 8 at 5:30 pm

Woodward Lecture Theatre 6, 2194 Health Sciences Mall, UBC

(A reception will be held at 5pm in Woodward IRC lobby. Light refreshments will be served)

Poster available [here](#).

Spring 2014 Wall Exchange with Stephen Lewis

Title: The End of AIDS: Reality or Hyperbole?"

Date: May 21, 2014

Time: 6:30 pm doors open, Lecture begins at 7:30 pm.

Location: Vogue Theatre, 918 Granville Street, Vancouver

Tickets are free but **must be reserved** and are in limited supply. Reserve [here](#).

Find more information [here](#).

Students Without Borders



Through the Students Without Borders® program, students are provided with an internship opportunity to work and contribute to development projects with WUSC and CECI's local partner organizations in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Based on a needs driven approach, both the student and the local partner organization benefit from such an experience.

Interns work abroad for 3 to 8 months, using their skills and background in a practical and cross-cultural setting. Many interns fulfill co-op requirements or receive academic credits towards their degree or diploma!

By working with local organizations in the developing world, you can gain valuable skills and work experience while contributing to the development work done overseas!

For more information click [here](#). Position for internships starting Sept 2014 are now online.

Reports of Interest

Accelerating R&D for Neglected Diseases through Global Collaboration.



“Recognizing the need for more progress in NTD research and product development, the **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)** joined ranks with BIO Ventures for Global Health (BVGH), and several leading pharmaceutical companies to form WIPO Re:Search. The consortium’s objective is to establish partnerships that facilitate sharing of IP assets to advance the discovery and development of new drugs, vaccines, and diagnostics for NTDs, malaria, and tuberculosis.

WIPO is the United Nations agency dedicated to the use of intellectual property (IP) (patents, copyright, trademarks, designs, etc.) as a means of stimulating innovation and creativity. The Organization’s mission is to promote innovation and creativity for the economic, social, and cultural development of all countries through a balanced and effective international intellectual property system, in cooperation with its 186

member states and other relevant international organizations.”

Download the report [here](#).