

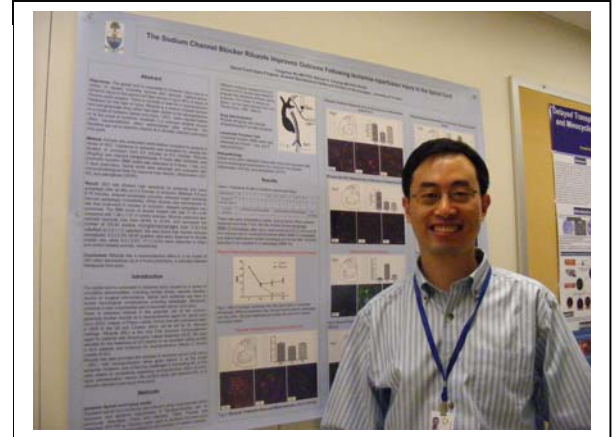
Krembil Neuroscience News

May, 2009

Krembil Researcher takes First Place at TWRI Research Day

Dr. Yongchao Wu, a distinguished visiting spinal surgeon and research fellow from China working with Dr. Fehlings received first place for his poster submission at the TWRI Research Day. Scientists, like Dr. Wu have been studying the neuroprotective effect of drug Riluzole in spinal cord injuries and have produced some very exciting results. Riluzole is an off-patent sodium channel blocker and is an FDA approved drug for Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS).

Dr. Wu's research poster detailed the effect of Riluzole after an ischemic injury to the spinal cord (ISCI) in a lab setting. The study found that Riluzole has a neuroprotective effect in a rat model of ISCI when administered up to 4 hours post-injury, a clinically-relevant therapeutic time point. The North American Clinical Trials Network (NACTN) is sponsoring a phase I neuroprotective trial at Toronto Western Hospital and 6 other North American centers to investigate the safety and preliminary efficacy of Riluzole. "This is potentially a very exciting advancement in spinal cord injury research," said Dr. Wu.



KNC researcher, Josef Buttigieg, was also among the award winners for his poster display.

Krembil Neuroscience Centre Shows Leadership in Inter-professional Education and Collaboration

Inter-professional education (IPE) has been an area of training in which the Krembil Neuroscience Centre is taking a leadership role in moving forward. In April, nursing, allied health students and medical residents completed an IPE placement on 5B Fell. This collaborative learning opportunity was the second placement to be hosted by the Krembil Neuroscience Program. Before receiving their certificates of completion, this diverse group of student health professionals showcased what they learned in a presentation about discharge planning.

"This group showed a great deal of enthusiasm and interest in working together to address issues that impact patient care on the unit," said Jennifer Uyeno, Practice Leader and one of the co-facilitators of the placement. "They will move forward in their careers having a better understanding of and an appreciation for their colleagues in other professions."

The group highlighted the fact that inter-professional collaboration is achieved through breaking down stereotypes, equalizing power and creating interdependencies. The group met weekly to discuss their roles as professionals, collaborating around case-based scenarios and challenges they were experiencing in their work on 5B Fell. The team identified current methods of communication between healthcare professionals and assessed the positive and negative attributes associated with each one. Together, the group brought forward new ideas to improve the way different healthcare providers on 5B Fell can communicate with each other.

"The Krembil Neuroscience Center has taken on this mission of hosting inter-professional student placements within the program, which I believe will have a great impact on how we work together as healthcare professionals," said Marleine El Khouri, educator and co-facilitator.



Neuro Critical Care

On April 7, 2009 the new Neuro Critical Care Unit opened in the Loretta Anne Rogers Critical Care Centre at Toronto Western Hospital. The NCCU hosts 12 beds, each within a single room. These private rooms not only transform the care experience for both patients and families but for staff as well. With more space to work with and features to enhance infection control, the 60 members of the NCCU staff now have all the tools they need to care for patients.

According to Meg Quesnelle, Nurse Manager of the NCCU, the unit also has a number of other features that improve work flow and visitor experience including dedicated education and team meeting rooms as well as several consultation rooms for health-care providers to speak with family members.

“Many staff members have been involved in the process of creating and relocating critical care for our neuroscience patients, and it is great to see this impressive project come to fruition,” said Meg.



Design elements, such as multiple work stations mean it is easier for staff to move around and eliminates the congestion of having a single nursing station.

Meg describes opening a new unit and transferring patients within a hospital as no small feat. She credits the collaborative efforts of the NCCU Team and ICU, PACU, House Keeping, Transportation, Pharmacy, SIMS, and Prism for the smooth transition. In addition, the leadership of the Clinical Directors Mary Ann Neary and Dina D’Agostino-Rose have been invaluable to the project as well as the staff involved.

“The Neuro Critical Care Unit brings our physical environment in line with the world-class care and expertise we provide at the Krembil Neuroscience Centre,” said Mary Ann Neary, Clinical Director of KNC and Critical Care.

Olivecrona Award

Dr. Michael Fehlings, Medical Director of the Krembil Neuroscience Centre and Head of the Spinal Program has been selected for the prestigious Olivecrona Award.

The award is named after Herbert Olivecrona, who is considered one of the founders of modern neurosurgery. His pioneering work at the Serafimer

Hospital in Stockholm contributed greatly to the perfection and standardization of neurosurgical techniques and treatment.

The Olivecrona Award is traditionally presented to the honouree at the Karolinska Institute, home of the Nobel Prize Foundation, in Sweden. The Olivecrona award is to acknowledge outstanding neurosurgeons and neuroscientists that have contributed with excellence to the neurosurgical field, based on development of microsurgical techniques, pedagogical skills or scientific contributions.

Dr. Fehlings is also the Director of Neurosciences at U of T and holds the Krembil Chair in Neural Repair and Regeneration.



KNC in the News

[Global Television](#) – Dr. Bernstein speaks about brain tumours

[CBC Radio](#) (Quirks and Quarks) – Can women handle more pain? Dr. Mailis answers this question!

[CTV’s W5](#) – KNC Epilepsy Team is featured in an in-depth look at epilepsy

