CSCI AWARDS
YIF Poster Awards 2008

Award recipients from the Young Investigator Forum at the CSCI meeting in Toronto, September, 2008. The investigators were students from Canadian MD/PhD and Clinician Investigator Programs. Clin Invest Med 2008; 31 (6): E408-E409.

Braedon McDonald

Braedon McDonald completed his BSc Honours in Microbiology and Immunology at McGill University in 2007. He is currently a Year 2 MD/PhD student at the University of Calgary. His PhD thesis project investigates the molecular mechanisms of leukocyte recruitment within tissue microvasculature during states of systemic inflammation, under the supervision of Dr. Paul Kubes in the Calvin, Phoebe, and Joan Snyder Institute of Infection, Immunity and Inflammation. Braedon is the chair of the MD-Plus (MD/PhD, MD/MSc) Student Executive at the University of Calgary, and is also the Calgary representative to CITAC.

Michael Ward

Michael Ward is in his 7th year of the MD/PhD programme at the University of Toronto, currently completing his PhD thesis. His area of research is in the development of novel cell-based therapies for cardiovascular disease, along with his supervisors Dr. Duncan Stewart (now at the Ottawa Health Research Institute) and Dr. Michael Kutryk (St. Michael’s Hospital in Toronto). Michael’s work specifically looks at the role of gene delivery of a potent vasculoprotective enzyme in endothelial progenitor cells (EPCs) of patients with coronary artery disease (CAD). Michael showed that the EPCs of these patients are dysfunctional but that gene delivery can restore some of their normal function. The results of Michael’s work are being used to design clinical trials of cell-based gene therapy for patients following an acute myocardial infarction. Michael is also the President of the Clinician Investigator Trainee Association of Canada (CITAC), which represents MD/PhD, MD/MSc and CIP trainees in Canada. This year, CITAC and the CSCI worked together to organize the Young Investigators’ Forum in Toronto, which was a great success, and both groups intend this collaboration to continue for several years.

Tom Appleton, PhD

Tom enrolled in the MD/PhD program at the University of Western Ontario in London in 2004. He completed his PhD in 2007 and is currently finishing his medical training. His research has included developmental studies in cartilage biology as well as physiological and molecular studies in the field of Osteoarthritis (OA). Tom’s cur-
rent work focuses largely on identifying the mechanisms that cause articular cartilage degeneration and promote degenerative joint disease. Notably, while working with Dr. Frank Beier in the CIHR Group in Skeletal Development & Remodeling, Tom’s work has led to the discovery of potential therapeutic targets involved in the articular cartilage degeneration that occurs in OA.

Laura Erdman

Originally from Toronto, Ms. Erdman completed her undergraduate degree at McMaster University in the Arts & Science Program. She then returned to Toronto to begin her studies in the MD/PhD program at the University of Toronto. She is currently pursuing a PhD in the laboratory of Dr. Kevin Kain, studying the interaction between the malaria parasite and host immune cells, particularly macrophages.

Douglas Wu

Born and raised in Edmonton, Alberta, Douglas completed a Bachelor of Science with High Distinction at the University of Toronto and then returned home to begin medical studies at the University of Alberta. Midway through his medical programme, he decided to pursue a PhD. He was fortunate enough to win two full scholarships to the University of Oxford where he completed a DPhil in Immunology in the Nuffield Department of Surgery. He has now returned to Edmonton to complete the final two years of medical school. His career goal is to contribute to the advancement of clinical medicine through solid evidence-based practice as well as basic translational research. He feels that the discoveries of science will increasingly have significant impact on clinical application, and that current efforts from both clinicians and scientists on a worldwide scale are ushering in a truly great era of medicine.

Arik Bergman

Dr. Arik Bergman is a nephrologist and Clinical Research Fellow at the University of Toronto, Department of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation. He graduated from the nephrology training program at the University of Toronto in 2007, and is currently pursuing an MSc degree in Health Services Research. His research interests focus on knowledge translation, and addressing the impact of estimated glomerular filtration rate reporting in Ontario.

Arezoo Astanehe

Arezoo Astanehe is a 4th year MD/PhD student at the University of British Columbia. She started her PhD studies in September 2006 under the supervision of Dr. Sandra Dunn at the Child and Family Research Institute. The particular focus of her work is on the basal-like breast cancers (BLBC), which are notably very aggressive and often incurable. Arezoo is currently studying the transcriptional regulation of the PIK3CA oncogene in BLBC. Her studies will provide new information regarding the possible therapeutic targets for prevention and intervention of breast cancer invasion and metastasis and ultimately help improve outcome for the women affected. Arezoo plans to pursue a residency in surgery upon completion of her degree.