



Michael Smith Foundation for
Health Research
Funded by the Government of British Columbia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New MSFHR research awards an investment in the health of British Columbians

Vancouver, BC | August 22, 2011

The Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (MSFHR) is pleased to announce the recipients of its 2010/11 research scholar and trainee funding competitions. Of the more than 300 applicants, MSFHR has funded 95 individuals working in diverse fields of health research. Thirty-two scholar awards will support researchers establishing or building research programs to address critical health issues. Awards to 63 post-doctoral fellows will provide an additional three years of advanced research training to prepare the next generation of scholars for our BC universities and hospital-based research centres.

“Through these awards, MSFHR is investing in a healthy future for British Columbia,” says Dr. Bruce Clayman, MSFHR’s interim President & CEO. “Providing support to the scholars helps recruit and keep these exceptional investigators in BC, enabling them to establish research programs that can attract additional funding into the province. The post-doctoral fellows hold promise to become the next generation of premier health researchers.”

The Foundation, celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, is funded primarily by the BC government, with a mandate to strengthen BC’s health research enterprise.

“A commitment to health research is a commitment to advancing the health of BC families,” says Health Minister Michael de Jong. “From seeking a cure for childhood diabetes, to HPV vaccine research, to helping patients in remote communities better manage chronic diseases at home, the Foundation supports health research that benefits thousands of families.”

Thanks to the BC government, MSFHR’s award competitions have funded more than 1,400 awards to outstanding researchers — from trainees through well-established investigators — who are working to resolve health and health system challenges. The Foundation also funds research teams, supports research projects, and brings together BC’s universities, health authorities, non-profit organizations and government for health research planning and action.

Suite 200
1285 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC V6H 3X8

www.msfhr.org
Phone: 604 730 8322
Fax: 604 730 0524

This year nine provincial and national organizations co-funded MSFHR's post-doctoral awards, expanding the number of recipients by 15. We gratefully acknowledge the support of AllerGen NCE, BC Cancer Foundation, BC Epilepsy Society, Breast Cancer Society of Canada, Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada, NeuroDevNet NCE, Provincial Health Services Authority, Rick Hansen Institute, and Women's Health Research Institute. A full list of MSFHR-funded scholars and post-doctoral fellows is available at [www.msfhr.org/who we fund/past recipients](http://www.msfhr.org/who_we_fund/past_recipients).

A backgrounder on four of our awardees follows this document.

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About the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research:

The Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (MSFHR), funded by the government of British Columbia, is the province's health research support agency. MSFHR's mandate is to strengthen BC's health research enterprise — which in turn leads to improvements in the health of British Columbians, their health system and their economy. MSFHR is dedicated to the memory of Nobel Prize recipient Dr. Michael Smith, a pre-eminent BC scientist with a long-standing commitment to supporting researchers throughout their careers.

Media contact:

Lori Last
Manager, Communications
Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research
604-714-2788
604-868-2313
llast@msfhr.org



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Dr. Jeremy Wulff (University of Victoria) Treatment of drug-resistant influenza

Dr. Jeremy Wulff's research group has developed a potent new class of antivirals to fight drug-resistant influenza. The emergence of new strains resistant to antiviral drugs such as Tamiflu is a significant problem in controlling the spread of influenza worldwide. Identifying and developing new drugs to effectively treat drug-resistant strains will have wide-reaching impacts on global health, as influenza infects approximately 10 percent of the human population each year, resulting in hundreds of thousands of deaths.

Dr. Alexander Chapman (Simon Fraser University) The role of emotion regulation in borderline personality disorder and self-injury

Dr. Alexander Chapman's research aims to better understand and treat borderline personality disorder (BPD) and related problems, such as self-injury and suicidal behaviour. Research in his Personality and Emotion Research Laboratory examines the role of emotion regulation in the cause, maintenance, and treatment of BPD and self-injury in hopes to improve treatment for these serious difficulties. BPD is among the most complex, misunderstood, and stigmatized mental health problems, representing up to 20 percent of psychiatric inpatients.

Dr. Linda Li (University of British Columbia) Optimizing health outcomes in arthritis care: Promoting knowledge translation through digital media

Dr. Linda Li's research aims to optimize the health of Canadians with arthritis by harnessing the power of digital media to deliver research knowledge when and where it is needed. Digital media offer a range of applications — social networking tools, interactive games, animation, and video/audio recordings — that provide tremendous flexibility for delivering "just-in-time" information to improve the use of effective treatments. Dr. Li's work includes building and evaluating interactive tools that deliver unbiased treatment information and programs that coach people to be physically active.

Dr. Kathleen Deering (UBC) Impact of structural and environmental factors on risk for HIV/sexually transmitted infections and barriers to accessing prevention, treatment and care among women involved in sex work

Dr. Kathleen Deering's research with the Gender and Sexual Health Initiative of the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS explores the social, structural, and environmental factors that place female sex workers in Vancouver at an elevated risk for HIV and sexually transmitted infections, violence, and poor access to health services. This project will access data from a five-year cohort study of 500 women and 250 youth sex workers in Vancouver. By utilizing survey data and Geographic Information Systems mapping technology, Dr. Deering's research will aim to inform public health policy recommendations and the

development of effective safer-environment interventions to improve the health and safety of sex workers.