



## DIVISION OF PHYSICAL MEDICINE AND REHABILITATION

Department of Medicine  
University of Toronto

June 2024

### Monthly update Newsletter

1. Andrea Furlan selected as recipient of the University of Toronto, DoM, 2024 Award in Quality and Innovation
2. All U of T PM&R residents pass the Royal College exams
3. Robert Simpson receives Dr. Patty Rigby Award for Early Career Excellence and Mentorship
4. Congratulations to Barathi Sreenivasan for winning the 2023-2024 Foundation's Faculty Teaching Award for Clinical Skills II from the Peters-Boyd Academy
5. Several division members receive the MD Program Teaching Award for Excellence in the 2022-2023 academic year
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7. Chief residents announced for 2024-2025
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9. Andrea Furlan provides interview to Globe and Mail regarding four ways gardening is a great work-out
10. Larry Robinson considering writing a book about his twisted relationship with the brachial plexus

1. Andrea Furlan selected as recipient of the University of Toronto, DOM, 2024 Award in Quality and Innovation  
We were very pleased to hear that Andrea Furlan has received this prestigious award in Quality and Innovation. This award was given to Andrea in recognition of her transformational impact on the treatment of chronic pain. She has addressed chronic pain at the practitioner level with development of opioid manager as well as co-leading the ECHO program (Extended Community Health Outcomes). Moreover, she has directly contributed to health literacy of the public through her internationally-recognized You Tube channel on chronic pain as well as her new book, "Eight Steps to Conquer Chronic Pain". Dr. Furlan received the award at the Department of Medicine, Academic Day, on June 19, 2024. She can be reached at: [Andrea.furlan@uhn.ca](mailto:Andrea.furlan@uhn.ca).
2. All U of T PM&R residents pass the Royal College exams  
We were very pleased to hear that all of our residents sitting for the Royal College examinations were successful.. This was an unusual year because our PGY4's (Alex Gasser, Eric Jeong and Nick Sequeira) and PGY5's (Alyssa Komar, Geoff Hartin and Linda Vi) all took the written component of the exam. In addition, the PGY5's successfully completed the OSCE component, which the PGY4's will sit for in October 2024. The Royal College exams are not easy and we congratulate our trainees on this achievement.

We also were pleased to see our graduating residents receive their diploma at the Department of Medicine graduation ceremony.



Geoff Hartin, Andrea Furlan, Alyssa Komar, Linda Vi



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3. Robert Simpson receives Dr. Patty Rigby Award for Early Career Excellence and Mentorship  
We were pleased to hear that Robert Simpson was awarded the Dr. Patty Rigby Award for Early Career Excellent and Mentorship by the Rehabilitation Sciences Institute Faculty & Staff Development Committee (FSDC)'s Awards Adjudication Sub-Committee, presented on May 30, 2024 during RSI Research Day. Congratulations can be extended to Robert who may be reached at [Robert.simpson@uhn.ca](mailto:Robert.simpson@uhn.ca).
4. Congratulations to Barathi Sreenivasan for winning the 2023-2024 Foundation's Faculty Teaching Award for Clinical Skills II from the Peters-Boyd Academy  
We were happy to hear that Barathi Sreenivasan won the above-named award for her excellence in medical school teaching. She received the award on June 19, 2024, from the leaders of the Peters-Boyd Academy to add to her many other teaching recognitions.
5. Several division members receive the MD Program Teaching Award for Excellence in the 2022-2023 academic year  
We've heard from several members of our division (we cannot find a centrally-generated list) that they have won the MD Program Teaching Award of Excellence for the 2022-2023 academic year. So far, we know that Peter Broadhurst, Kim Coros, Heather McNeill, and Nimish Mittal have received the above-named award. There may be others as well. We are glad to hear about these awards which are generally received in disproportionately high numbers compared to the size of our division. Congratulations to all.
6. Welcome to our newest residents  
Lisa Becker's presented at our annual retreat on June 21, 2024 to welcome incoming PGY1s who include:
  - Christopher Bhatla, University of British Columbia
  - Emily Domerchie, McMaster University
  - Kevin Murray, University of Toronto
  - Jessica Saini, McMaster UniversityPhotos can be seen in the enclosed PDF.
7. Chief residents announced for 2024-2025  
We are pleased to announce that the chief residents for 2024-2025 will be our PGY5's (this change is a result of moving the Royal College exams earlier). Alex Gasser, Eric Jeong and Nick Sequeira will serve as co-chief residents during the academic year. To reach them, you may write to them at their shared email at: [uoftpmrchiefs@gmail.com](mailto:uoftpmrchiefs@gmail.com).
8. Amanda Mayo and Steve Dilkas recognized for their work in Ukraine with amputees  
We were happy to hear that Amanda Mayo and Steve Dilkas were recognized for their work in Ukraine with amputees. The full story can be viewed at:  
<https://deptmedicine.utoronto.ca/news/dom-physiatrists-help-ukrainian-rehabilitation-hospital-produce-3d-printed-prosthetics>
9. Andrea Furlan provides interview to Globe and Mail regarding four ways gardening is a great work-out  
We were pleased to see this article in the Globe and Mail in which Andrea Furlan was interviewed. For those of you who are gardeners, please be aware that this activity can contribute to your overall conditioning and wellness. The full link can be seen at: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/health-and-fitness/article-gardening-exercise-benefits/>.
10. Larry Robinson considering writing a book about his twisted relationship with the brachial plexus  
Now that Larry Robinson will have more time to focus on the things that matter to him, he is considering writing a brief novella about his long and complex relationship with the brachial plexus. As a first step, he has decided that he would work on reviewer comments before actually starting this piece of work. This will be an important first step in his social media campaign to promote the book.



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### “My Life with the Brachial Plexus” Reviewer Quotes

“This is a chilling and engrossing chapter which will sweep you along from the deceptively, quiet opening to the shattering, unthinkable ending...has a multi-megaton wallop.”

“Razor sharp...harrowing...a cleverly-crafted, easily read novel.”

“An astonishing, beautifully designed plexus, climbing out of the primordial soup, has been discovered. Now, one of mankind’s most thrilling anatomical designs has come true. Plexuses being perfected for eons now roam the planet with their awesome presence and profound mystery, and all the world can enjoy them...Until something goes wrong....”

“Big, brave, stouthearted. It is the sort of story physiatry supposedly doesn’t make anymore. “My Life with the Brachial Plexus” is the escapist story we all need.”

“Riveting. Exciting. Fast-Paced. Hard to put down. A deft scientific thriller. A snappy nightmare of science run amok. A tornado-paced tale. A scary, creepy,

“Two enthusiastic forelimbs up.”

“You don’t read this story, you live it. Suspense and excitement boil furiously. It has everything, roots, trunks, divisions, and cords. Rousing, riveting, and spellbinding.”

“In each generation, one novel captures the poignancy and passion of its day. ‘My Life with the Brachial Plexus...’is too big, too beautiful to ever forget. It is monumental, enthralling, a triumph.”

“So emotional, so touching, you need to read this with someone you love. Expect the impossible.”

As this will be Larry Robinson’s last newsletter as Division Director for PM&R, he wishes to thank the entire community for their support over the last decade. He appreciates the many stories and achievements that were shared for the newsletter and hopes that it served its purpose as a “small town newspaper” where readers would be interested to hear about their colleagues and friends (although some may have skipped to the comics at the end). He is happy that readers were able to tolerate the sophomoric sense of humour sprinkled throughout these publications.

Larry Robinson MD  
Chief, Rehabilitation Services  
John and Sally Eaton Chair in Rehabilitation Science