

Focus on Faculty #17

Doreen Wan-Chow-Wah



[Dr. Doreen Wan-Chow-Wah](#) is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Geriatric Medicine, Department of Medicine and Associate member in the Department of Oncology, Faculty of Medicine at McGill University. She obtained her Medical degree and completed her Internal Medicine residency, Geriatric Medicine fellowship and a clinical fellowship year in Medical Oncology at McGill University.

Given that aging is the number one risk factor for developing cancer, and that over 40% of cancer incidence and 60% of cancer deaths occur in those aged 70 years and older, Dr. Wan-Chow-Wah's clinical, educational and research interests have focused on Geriatric Oncology, with the goal of optimizing the care of older adults with cancer. In 2006, under the vision and leadership of Dr. Howard Bergman, she played a key role in establishing the Geriatric Oncology Clinic at the Segal Cancer Centre of the Jewish General Hospital, the first of its kind in Canada. Its mission is to assist Oncology teams in the care of older cancer patients at any time during their cancer care trajectory. Often, patients are referred for pre-op evaluations, treatment opinion and/or cognitive issues. Dr. Wan-Chow-Wah has been the Medical Director of the Clinic since 2008. In 2009, she was instrumental in helping the Geriatric Oncology clinic successfully obtain the designation of Supra-Regional center by the *Programme Québécois de Lutte contre le Cancer* in recognition of its expertise in the field of Geriatric Oncology.

Dr. Wan-Chow-Wah has been an invited speaker on the topic of Geriatric Oncology at the local, national, and international level. Her experience in pioneering the first Geriatric Oncology service in Canada spurred interest across the country, namely at the British Columbia Cancer Agency and the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre in Toronto; a Geriatric Oncology service has recently been implemented at the latter, inspired in part by our work at McGill.

Most of her clinical duties as a geriatrician-internist are based at the Royal Victoria Hospital of the MUHC, in the ER, inpatient wards and outpatient clinic. She also sees patients at the Montreal General Hospital, and works as a consultant at the Montreal Chinese Hospital.

On the administrative and educational fronts, Dr. Wan-Chow-Wah has been Program Director of the Geriatric Oncology fellowship offered by the McGill University Post Graduate Medical Education office since 2009. She has also been the Coordinator for the Geriatrics rotation for specialty residents at McGill since 2011. Most recently this year, she was appointed Program Director of the Geriatric Medicine fellowship at McGill. She has participated in a Web based interactive CME course in Geriatric Oncology under the auspices of the McGill University Centre for Continuing Medical Education. Under her leadership as Chair of the scientific committee, the 35th Canadian Geriatrics Society annual scientific meeting, which was held in Montreal last year, was one of the most successful and well attended CGS meetings. Since 2015, she has enjoyed her role as a Royal College Examiner for the French Internal Medicine examination.

We asked Dr. Wan-Chow-Wah to list a few of her articles whose work she is particularly proud or enjoyed the most. This is what she provided:

Puts MT, Tapscott B, Fitch M, Howell D, Monette J, **Wan-Chow-Wah D**, Krzyzanowska M, Leighl NB, Springall E, Alibhai SM. A systematic review of factors influencing older adults' decision to accept or decline cancer treatment. *Cancer Treatment Reviews*. 2015 Feb;41(2):197-215.

Wan-Chow-Wah D, Monette J, Monette M, Sourial N, Retornaz F, Batist G, Puts M, Bergman H. Difficulties in decision making regarding chemotherapy for older cancer patients: A census of cancer physicians. *Critical Reviews in Oncology/Hematology* 2011; 78: 45-58.

Retornaz F, Monette J, Batist G, Monette M, Sourial N, Small D, Caplan S, **Wan-Chow-Wah D**, Puts M, Bergman H. Usefulness of frailty markers in the assessment of the health and functional status of older cancer patients referred for chemotherapy: a pilot study. *Journal of Gerontology: Medical Sciences* 2008; 63A (5): 518-522.