

Focus on Faculty #3 **Tarek Hijal**



[Dr. Tarek Hijal](#) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Oncology and a member of the Division of Radiation Oncology at the McGill University Health Centre since 2009.

Dr. Hijal was born in Beirut, Lebanon and grew up between Beirut, Varese in Italy, and Montreal. He studied biochemistry and medicine at McGill University, before pursuing a residency in radiation oncology. He then completed a fellowship in breast and hematologic radiation oncology at the Institut Curie in Paris, France, before joining McGill. During his fellowship, his research focused on hypofractionated radiotherapy and the use of simultaneous integrated boost in breast cancer.

In addition to clinical research in breast cancer, Dr. Hijal is interested and has been involved in clinical operations in radiation oncology and at the level of the Cancer Care Mission at the MUHC. As Associate Director for Clinical Affairs of the Division of Radiation Oncology from 2011 to early 2014, Dr. Hijal worked on streamlining clinical operations and expanding the use of the electronic medical records and informatics in the division, including data analysis.

Through funding from the Rossy Cancer Network, he implemented a self-check-in system for patients in radiation oncology. With Professor Laurie Hendren from the department of Computer Science and Dr. John Kildea from the department of Medical Physics, they founded the Health Informatics Group, which uses informatics in health care, through patient record databases, to improve patient care. The HIG is currently developing, with funding from the Q+ project of the MUHC, a personalized patient portal with a real-time system to predict wait times for start of radiation treatment and during visits to the cancer clinic.

Finally, his interest in health care management led him to pursue a Master's degree in Health Care Economics, Policy and Management at the London School of Economics, sponsored by a bursary from the Rossy Cancer Network, which he will complete this fall.

When not immersed in clinical and administrative work, Dr. Hijal enjoys playing soccer and following his favourite hockey team, the Montreal Canadiens.

We asked Dr. Hijal to list a few of his articles whose work he is particularly proud or enjoyed the most. This is what he provided:

1. For starting a collaboration on breast cancer with two other hospitals in Québec:
Hathout L, **Hijal T**, Théberge V, Fortin B, Vulpe H, Hogue JC, Lambert C, Bahig H, Provencher L, Vavassis P, Yassa M. Hypofractionated radiation therapy for breast ductal carcinoma in situ. *Int J Radiat Oncol Biol Phys*. 2013 Dec 1;87(5):1058-63.
2. For publishing with the French Society of Radiation Oncology (Société française de radiothérapie oncologique (SFRO)):
Tiberi D, **Hijal T**, Yassa M. Radiothérapie externe hypofractionnée du cancer du sein localisé : où en est-on ? *Cancer/Radiothérapie*, In press.
3. For looking at costs of healthcare in Québec:
Hijal, T. Assessment of inappropriate staging tests in early-stage breast cancer: Cost to the Québec government. Master's thesis submission at the London School of Economics.