We should like to congratulate Bernard Robaire and his team of 17 investigators from McGill, MUHC, Laval University, Dalhousie University, University of Western Ontario University of Toronto and Health Canada for successfully competing in the Team grant competition from IHDHCY (Institute of Human Development, Child and Youth Health) on Environmental and Reproductive Health. The team received a 5-year award of just under $500,000/yr/ and is composed of reproductive toxicologists, molecular biologists, epidemiologists, chemical engineers, clinicians, ethicists, and lawyers. The title of the application is “CIHR Team in the impact of exposure to phthalates, their metabolites and “green” plasticizers on male reproductive health”. A brief synopsis of the objective of the proposal is found below.

Plasticizers are needed for the production of an immense range of consumer products. The challenge is to develop “green” plasticizers to replace phthalates in plastics. Green plasticizers should not be toxic and, ideally, should be biodegradable so that they do no accumulate in the environment. To understand the mechanisms underlying the male reproductive toxicity of phthalates and to progress towards the ultimate goal of developing replacements, we propose to pursue four specific aims: 1) to develop “green” replacement plasticizers and to determine the effects of these “green” plasticizers on the targets of phthalates and their metabolites in cell-based assays, focusing on Leydig, Sertoli and male germ cells; 2) to evaluate the impact of exposure to “green” replacement plasticizers on the developing and adult testis in an animal model; 3) to test the hypothesis that phthalates adversely affect human male reproductive health by examining the relationship between exposure to phthalates and male infertility; and 4) to explore the ethical, legal and regulatory obligations of stakeholders affected by phthalates, including industry, regulators, and the general public, with workshops, focus groups, and interviews.