

# «The Inaugural Symposium on Cannabis and People Living with HIV: At the Crossroads Between Neuropsychology and Inflammation»

*Please see agenda below for more details*

Organized by: Dr Cecilia Costiniuk, RI-MUHC  
Dr Mohammad-Ali Jenabian, Université du Québec à Montréal  
Dr Sergio Rueda, U of Toronto/Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

*DATE: Friday, April 5, 2019*

*PLACE: MUHC Glen site Research Institute, Auditorium, S1.1129*

*TIME: 8:30 – 16:30*

***\*\*\*Registration is free, but required. Places are limited\*\*\****

***Please RSVP to Julie Bellingham: [julie.bellingham@muhc.mcgill.ca](mailto:julie.bellingham@muhc.mcgill.ca) or (514) 934-1934, ext. 32187 by Wednesday, March 18th***

*\*This event is made possible by\**



*Infectious Diseases and Immunity in Global Health Program  
Programme en maladies infectieuses et immunité en santé mondiale*



Division of Infectious Diseases



## Session Objectives and Agenda

### **The Inaugural Symposium on Cannabis and People Living with HIV: At the Crossroads Between Neuropsychology and Inflammation**

Date: Friday April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019; 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Location: Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre, S1-level Auditorium, 1001 boulevard Decarie, Montreal, Quebec H4A

*Speakers, titles and objectives:*

**Ms Shari Margolese, Community Advocate, Former Chair of the CIHR Canadian HIV Trials (CTN) Network Community Advisory Committee**

Medical cannabis in the era of legalization: A patient's perspective

- 1) Describe the history of medical cannabis access in Canada
- 2) Describe the proposed new access system for medical patients
- 3) Describe pros and cons for patients under the new legislation with respect to:
  - a. cost
  - b. selection and access
  - c. consumption space, driving and other legalities
  - d. research

**Dr David Grelotti, MD, Assistant Clinical Professor, Health Sciences, University of California San Diego and Director of Owen Health Clinic, San Diego**

The problems and promise of cannabis use among PLWH

- 1) To review the epidemiology of cannabis use among PLWH
- 2) To evaluate how cannabis use affects key aspects of the HIV continuum of care
- 3) To explore medicinal cannabis use among PLWH

**Dr. Thomas Marcotte, PhD, Professor of Psychiatry and Co-Director of the Center for Medicinal Cannabis Research at the University of California, San Diego**

HIV, Cannabis, and the Brain: Impacts on cognition and public safety

- 1) To discuss the effects of HIV infection, and cannabis, on cognitive functioning
- 2) To discuss the impact of HIV and cannabis on driving ability
- 3) To discuss methods for identifying cannabis-impaired drivers

**Dr Mahesh Mohan, DVM, MS, PhD, Associate Professor, Division of Comparative Pathology, Tulane National Primate Research Centre, Covington, Louisiana**

Cannabinoid-induced anti-inflammatory effects during Simian Immunodeficiency Virus (SIV) disease

- 1) To review the effects  $\Delta$ -9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) administration prior to and during SIV infection of rhesus macaques on intestinal T cell activation/exhaustion, macrophage dynamics and oral microbiome.
- 2) To review the evidence showing that chronic THC administration to SIV-infected macaques induces epigenetic effects (DNA methylation) in the intestinal epithelium, prevents collagen deposition in the lymph nodes and modulates proinflammatory microRNA and gene expression in the brain.

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### **Dr Jennifer Manuzak, PhD, Research Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Miller School of Medicine, University of Miami, Batchelor's Children's Research Institute**

#### The effects of cannabis use on inflammation, immunity and microbial dysbiosis in HIV infection

- 1) To discuss the effects of cannabis use on indicators of inflammation and immune activation in PLWH on ART in regards to frequency, phenotype and cytokine-producing capacity of innate and adaptive immune cells
- 2) To review the effects of cannabis use on plasma markers of microbial translocation, gastrointestinal barrier dysfunction and inflammation in PLWH

### **Dr M-J Milloy, PhD, Research Scientist with the British Columbia Centre on Substance Use at the British Columbia Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS**

#### Scientific rationale to evaluate the use of cannabis/cannabinoids to reduce the harms of opioid and stimulant dependence in the context of the North American overdose crisis

- 1) Review the pre-clinical evidence to support a beneficial effect of cannabis/cannabinoid exposure on substance use-related disease processes, including chronic pain, anxiety/depression and drug withdrawal;
- 2) Outline recent findings from Vancouver and other settings describing the ad hoc use of cannabis/cannabinoids as a harm reduction strategy by individuals living with substance use disorders at risk of overdose;
- 3) Describe preliminary findings from an observational evaluation of a community-based cannabis for harm reduction intervention in Vancouver and outline a planned experimental trial of cannabis in the context of opioid dependence

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**AGENDA**

- 8:30 to 9:15: Registration/Coffee
- 9:15 to 9:30: **Welcome & opening remarks**  
Dr Cecilia Costiniuk, MD
- 9:30 to 10:15: **Medical Cannabis in the era of legalization: A patient's perspective**  
Ms Shari Margolese
- 10:15 to 11:00 **The problems and promise of cannabis use among PLWH**  
Dr David J. Grelotti, MD
- 11:00 to 11:15 BREAK**
- 11:15 to 12:00 **HIV, Cannabis, and the Brain: Impacts on cognition and public safety**  
Dr Thomas Marcotte, PhD
- 12:00 to 13:00 LUNCH**
- 13:00 to 13:45: **Cannabinoid-induced anti-inflammatory effects during Simian Immunodeficiency Virus (SIV) disease**  
Dr Mahesh Mohan, DVM, MS, PhD
- 13:45 to 14:30: **Heavy cannabis use associated with reduction in activated and inflammatory immune cell frequencies in antiretroviral therapy–treated People Living with HIV**  
Dr Jennifer Manuzak, PhD
- 14:30 to 14:45: BREAK**
- 14:45 to 15:30: **Preliminary findings on the role of cannabis/cannabinoids on HIV disease and reducing the harms of substance use disorders**  
Dr M-J Milloy, PhD
- 15:30 to 16:00: **Panel Discussion: Key research priorities for the next 5 years**  
All speakers, Enrico Mandarino (Chair of the CTN Community Advisory Committee) and organizers
- 16:00 to 16:15: **Closing remarks and symposium adjournment**  
Dr Cecilia Costiniuk

## Speaker Biographies

**Shari Margolese** has been an active voice for people living with HIV since her diagnosis in 1993. As a mother, her advocacy and education efforts have often focused on the needs of women and families living with HIV. Shari has served as the National Women's Representative of the Canadian Treatment Action Council (CTAC) and as a volunteer with Voices of Positive Women, where she founded a ground breaking support group for HIV + mothers in 1994. Currently, Shari is a steering committee member of Blueprint for Action Canada and ATHENA. Shari holds an appointment on the CIHR HIV/AIDS Research Advisory Committee (CHARAC) and she is a leading advocate for the meaningful involvement of people living with HIV in the research process. Shari is a freelance writer, public speaker and community consultant with expertise in knowledge translation and community based research. Shari has been awarded the Golden Jubilee Medal of Queen Elizabeth II and other honors for her contribution and dedication to the HIV Community.

**David J. Grelotti, MD** is an adult and child psychiatrist and directs mental health services at UC San Diego Health's Owen Clinic and related illnesses. Dr. Grelotti provides care for mental health, substance use, and related disorders to children, adolescents, and adults with HIV and at risk for HIV. In addition to clinical care, Dr. Grelotti works to eliminate the mental health treatment gap through a variety of international collaborations. He leverages his expertise to promote mental health globally as the co-director of the International Addiction Technology Transfer Center in Ukraine, a member of the University of California GloCal Steering Committee and as a member of the executive committee of the Center for Global Mental Health Initiative at UC San Diego. Dr. Grelotti is affiliated with the HIV Neurobehavioral Research Program and Center for AIDS Research at UC San Diego and conducts research both locally and in Haiti and South Africa. He is also an investigator at the Center for Medicinal Cannabis Research at UC San Diego, where he and his colleagues are conducting clinical trials focusing on medicinal cannabis. He lectures widely on various aspects of HIV psychiatry and medicinal cannabis.

**Thomas D. Marcotte, PhD**, is Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), and Center Manager of the HIV Neurobehavioral Research Center at UCSD. His research focuses on the development of methods for assessing and predicting the impact of cognitive impairments on the ability to carry out everyday activities, in particular, driving an automobile. Dr. Marcotte also has a program of research investigating HIV-related neurocognitive dysfunction, particularly in the international context. His primary scientific interests include: 1) Neuropsychological sequelae of HIV infection; 2) Impact of mild neurocognitive disorders on everyday functioning; 3) Use of neuropsychological tests/driving simulators to predict impaired driving abilities; 4) Neurocognitive effects of HIV in the international context; 5) Cognitive effects of cannabis. He has published numerous articles and book chapters on these topics and served on the editorial boards of the Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society and Neuropsychology.

**Jennifer A. Manuzak, PhD** is a Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the Miller School of Medicine, University of Miami. Her research interests are focused on gaining a better understanding of mucosal immunity, its critical role in HIV acquisition and pathogenesis, and how alterations at mucosal surfaces may contribute to risk for non-AIDS morbidity and mortality. The ultimate goal of these studies is to aid in the development of more effective treatments and successful interventions for HIV infection. Dr. Manuzak's current research endeavors include assessing the impacts of malaria co-infection on HIV vaccination in non-human primates and characterizing the effect cannabis use on immune function in PLWH.

## Speaker Biographies

**Mahesh Mohan, DVM, MS, PhD**, is an Associate professor in the Division of Comparative Pathology at the Tulane National Primate Research Center, Covington, Louisiana. His laboratory focuses on the role of epigenetic mechanisms, particularly, the role of microRNAs and DNA methylation in the molecular pathogenesis of HIV/SIV infection. He has published studies describing the role of microRNAs and its target genes in intestinal epithelial barrier disruption and microbial translocation, and intestinal immune cell activation, three important events proposed to drive HIV/SIV disease progression. More recently, he has published on the effects of cannabinoid administration on intestinal T cell dynamics, pro-inflammatory gene and microRNA expression in acute and chronically SIV-infected macaques. His current studies focus on the use of cannabinoids to reduce chronic inflammation in HIV/SIV, gluten sensitive enteropathy (celiac disease) and Tuberculosis using the rhesus macaque model. Research work in his laboratory is funded by NIDDK, NIDCR and NIDA.

**MJ Milloy, PhD**, is an epidemiologist, a research scientist at the British Columbia Centre on Substance Use, and an assistant professor of medicine at the University of British Columbia. As the principal investigator of the AIDS Care Cohort to evaluate Exposure to Survival Services (ACCESS), an ongoing prospective cohort of people living with HIV who use illicit drugs, he has published studies describing the effects of exposure to cannabis/cannabinoids on HIV treatment patterns, HIV disease progression, and the ad hoc use of cannabis to reduce the harms of other illicit drug use. His current research focuses on observational and experimental studies to assess the possible role of cannabis/cannabinoids in addressing North America's opioid overdose crisis.