



Dr. Milton Harry MBBS, DM (General Surgery)
Clinical Research Fellow, General Surgery

A Toronto winter may be jarring after years in the Caribbean climate, but in 2010, the benefits of University Health Network's environment prompted Jamaican Dr. Milton Harry to accept a Research Fellowship in General Surgery at UHN.

Before his move to Canada, Dr. Harry's education included graduation from the University of the West Indies (UWI), after which he stayed on at UWI to study in the field of general surgery between 2005 and 2010. Upon graduating, Dr. Harry was faced with a lack of available clinical research opportunities in the field at home. Consequently, he was alerted by colleagues to opportunities available at UHN, and the promise of a fellowship where he could build on clinical research efforts in general surgery.

Now working with Dr. David Urbach, Scientist and Director of UHN's Bariatric Program, Dr. Harry has been involved in processes of care research in the operating room, and has accrued an understanding of endoscopies he has never had before. "I've seen a lot of quality of care in surgery here," elaborates Dr. Harry, "and Dr. Urbach is a great person and a good role model."

After his Research Fellowship has been completed, Dr. Harry will move on to a one-year Fellowship in Minimally Invasive Surgery (MIS) at UHN in July 2012. The following summer, he plans to return to Jamaica to work at Cornwall Regional Hospital, a community teaching hospital, and part of a health care network that includes UWI Hospital. There, he and other colleagues plan on starting an MIS fellowship training program, which will be the very first fellowship program in the Caribbean.



Dr. Peter Kim MD, MSc, FRCSC
Sanofi-Aventis HPB Surgical Oncology Fellow

A native of Vancouver, British Columbia, Dr. Peter Kim attended medical school at the University of Western Ontario, and – after graduating in 2002 – trained in general surgery at the University of British Columbia. Upon completing his Master’s in Embryonic Stem Cell Work, Dr. Kim undertook a two-year fellowship in abdominal transplant surgery at the prestigious Baylor Regional Transplant Institute in Dallas in 2008.

As a fellow in Hepatic-Pancreatic-Biliary (HPB) surgical oncology, Dr. Kim was drawn to UHN due to its outstanding quality of work, culture of training fellows, and history offering one of the oldest and the best HPB fellowships in the world. Over the past 18 months, he has been impressed with his rich exposure to new experiences and a large variety of cases. “The experience you get at UHN is second to none,” says Kim. “The breadth and the complexity of HPB cases at UHN is unparalleled.”

With his fellowship over in June, 2012, Dr. Kim will be returning to the Baylor Institute, where he has been offered a job specializing in liver and kidney transplant surgery, as well as HPB oncology. With Dr. Kim and his wife, Hannah– a paediatric general surgeon – both securing jobs in Dallas, Dr. Kim recognizes the impact that UHN has played in his life and career.

“The fellowship has been a wonderful experience,” he asserts. “ I’m a better surgeon because I came here.”



Dr. Diego Mercer MD

Joint Department of Medical Imaging – Abdominal Imaging Fellow

Born in Argentina, Dr. Diego Mercer emigrated to Israel in 1977, and now lives in Kiryat Ono, a city near Tel Aviv. Although university would have to wait until three years of military service were completed, his enthusiasm and dedication propelled him through medical school, followed by a five-year residency at the Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Center.

Accepting a Fellowship in Abdominal Imaging at the Joint Department of Medical Imaging, Dr. Mercer arrived in Toronto in July 2011. The Department spans five downtown hospitals, including Toronto General, Toronto Western and Princess Margaret (University Health Network), Mount Sinai and Women's College, and is equipped with leading-edge imaging facilities. Dr. Mercer continues to find the breadth of his subspecialty fascinating, and has deepened his knowledge and experience in liver, pancreaticobiliary, genitourinary and bowel imaging,

Along with his colleagues at the various hospitals, Dr. Mercer has found great strength in the city itself – an environment where his wife and four daughters have had the opportunity to be immersed in a melting pot of new experiences, culture and language. He has also found further fulfillment through a group of other Fellows from Israel living in Toronto. Together with their families, they form a home away from home. "Toronto as a city has been very welcoming," says Dr. Mercer. "Coming here is not just about a job, but about all the opportunities for my family as well."

Wrapping up his Fellowship in June, 2012, Dr. Mercer will be returning to the Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Center, where he looks forward to applying his experience gained in Toronto. "I have been able to further develop my knowledge of various imaging techniques and pathologies," summarizes Dr. Mercer. "The fellowship has given me an advantage in Israel, and in my career."



Dr. Mohammad Alsuwaidan MD, FRCPC, DipABPN
Clinical and Research Fellow, Psychiatry

Dr. Mohammad Alsuwaidan is an internationally-trained psychiatrist specializing in mood disorders. He was raised in the United States, went to medical school in Kuwait and completed his psychiatry residency in Toronto. Dr. Alsuwaidan has also trained at the Stanford University Bipolar Disorders Clinic and the Tufts University Mood Disorders Clinic. Additionally, he is doing a part-time Masters of Public Health at the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health.

As a Research, Innovation and Scholarship in Education (RISE) Fellow at the University of Toronto's Wilson Centre for Research in Education, Dr. Alsuwaidan envisions being a bridge between Kuwait and Canada. "I strongly believe in the globalization of medical education, and I am aiming to become a global link that facilitates this exchange of knowledge between the Middle East and North America," says Dr. Alsuwaidan. "Given UHN's well-established partnership with the Kuwait Cancer Control Centre, I hope to strengthen collaborative research connections between UHN and Kuwait University."

In recognition of his work, Dr. Alsuwaidan has received many prestigious awards, including the Association for Academic Psychiatry Fellowship, the Lilly Young Investigator Fellowship in Bipolar Disorder and the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) Leadership Fellowship – considered the oldest and most prestigious of the APA resident fellowships.

Furthermore, he has contributed towards novel treatments for mood disorders, the use of technology in service delivery and knowledge transfer, and mental health systems/policy reform. He demonstrates a passion for bringing the ideals of democratic progression and social justice that he learned in Canada and the US to the Middle East. "I am working towards incorporating reformatory provisions in the mental health system there that cater to women, children, minorities and immigrants in order to improve the issues caused by socio-economic and cultural disparities," asserts Dr. Alsuwaidan.



Dr. Minako Uchino MD, PhD, M.Ed **Clinical Fellow, Radiation Oncology**

Growing up in Japan, Dr. Minako Uchino received her medical training across various Tokyo metropolitan areas, beginning with the National Tokyo Medical Centre. Six years in medical school in Japan was followed by two years in general training, six years in the department of radiology and department of radiation oncology, and three years as a staff doctor in the field. Faced with a lack of medical education programs catering to radiation oncology in Japan, Dr. Uchino began a global investigation of facilities that could offer further experience. Of the four choices available, the University of Toronto and UHN showed the most promise.

In 2008, Dr. Minako visited the Department of Radiation Oncology at UHN. She consequently started Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto in 2009, and – after one term – began her clinical fellowship as UHN’s very first radiation oncology fellow from Japan.

Following the completion of her graduate studies in OISE in June 2011 and Fellowship in Radiation Oncology in June 2012, Dr. Uchino is planning to help change Japan’s education system. Traditionally, physician skills have been developed on an apprenticeship, one-on-one level in Japan. But while Japanese society has accepted that training take place under the supervision of one doctor, Dr. Uchino recognizes that dramatic progress in technology – as well as social responsibility – has resulted in the need for a more systematic medical education system based under an official professional body.

A musician as well as a physician, Dr. Uchino played the carillon in Soldiers’ Tower at U of T at last year’s Remembrance Day service, a memorial to university members lost in both World Wars. The passion she feels for both medicine and music is reflected when she speaks about her work here, and the opportunities that lie ahead. “Of all the places in the world that offer medical education in radiation oncology,” says Dr. Uchino, “the program here is unquestionably the best.”



Dr. David Cavallucci MBBS, FRACS **HPB Transplant Fellow**

Growing up in Brisbane, Australia, Dr. David Cavallucci attended Brisbane's University of Queensland, where he graduated with his BSc and was accepted to medical school. Undertaking surgical training across several Sydney hospitals, Dr. Cavallucci was awarded his FRACS in 2008 and accepted a two-year ANZHPBA (Australia New Zealand Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary Association) Fellowship in HPB Surgery. Including a laparoscopic HPB fellowship, the prestigious appointment was split between a one-year post in Sydney and one in Brisbane.

Learning about the extraordinary work at UHN through colleagues who had returned to Australia from Toronto, Dr. Cavallucci accepted his position as Abdominal Organ Transplant Fellow, beginning in January, 2011. Emphasizing the support of Dr. Paul Greig, Program Director of the Surgical Abdominal Organ Transplant Fellowship, he continues to be impressed with the opportunities at UHN that always keep him busy.

"There is no place like Toronto for the sheer variety and volume of transplant cases," enthuses Dr. Cavallucci. "In my first year here, I have done more transplants than the entire program did in Brisbane in a year."

Wrapping up his fellowship in December, 2012, Dr. Cavallucci will return to the field of HPB and transplantation at Royal Brisbane Hospital in Australia – part of a health care network associated with the University of Queensland. Utilizing his experience working as part of the biggest liver donor program in the Western World at UHN, Dr. Cavallucci is looking forward to overseeing a revamped liver transplantation program that offers Australia's first adult live-donor liver transplant division. He will also be building on his work in the HPB arena, with a focus on complex liver resection surgery.



Dr. Mariam Baghdady BDS, MScHPB

Wilson Centre Education Fellow

Born in Egypt, raised in Boston and Saudi Arabia, and living in Kuwait. Mariam Baghdady's drive and academic excellence earned her a scholarship at Kuwait University, where she also trained at the university's faculty of dentistry. Excited by opportunities overseas, she took up her residency at the University of Toronto between 2005 and 2008, specializing in Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology. Also referred to as Dental and Maxillofacial Radiology, this is a specialty of dentistry concerned with diagnostic imaging applied to the examination of craniofacial, dental and adjacent structures.

In conjunction with her efforts as a Wilson Centre Education Fellow, Mariam is now pursuing her PhD in Dental and Maxillofacial Radiology. Offering invaluable support for her PhD studies, the fellowship has provided the space, resources, and – most importantly – the help of colleagues such as her fellowship supervisor Dr. Nicole Woods to best achieve her goals.

"Being in a place with such collaboration and all these different scientists and fellows has been very helpful," Mariam explains. "It has enriched my experience, and Dr. Woods has been a huge inspiration."

Following the completion of her fellowship and PhD training in 2013, Mariam is returning to Kuwait University's Faculty of Dentistry. Not only will Mariam be the first person at the faculty with formal training in Medical Education, she will also be the first Kuwaiti to specialize in Dental and Maxillofacial Radiology. Overseeing the establishment of the school's first undergraduate dentistry program, she stresses the importance of the Wilson Education Fellowship in achieving her dreams. "I've got such an incredible network of support that will undoubtedly be important when I embark on my academic career in Kuwait," says Mariam.



Dr. Niccolò Daddi MD, PhD **Thoracic Surgery Clinical Fellow**

Born and raised in Rome, Italy, Dr. Niccolò Daddi attended medical school at the University of Perugia, one of the oldest (1308) Universities in Europe. Following his PhD period in Bologna, Italy, and post-doctorate in St. Louis (MO) USA, he returned to Perugia; first for his Thoracic Surgery Residency, and then as Assistant Professor of Thoracic Surgery. Efforts have also included working for the European Society of Thoracic Surgery and the major Italian Societies of Thoracic Surgery.

Drawn to UHN due to its global reputation of excellence in thoracic surgery – which began at the time of Professor Griffith Pearson – Dr. Daddi started his fellowship in January 2011, with a focus on both thoracic surgery and lung transplant. Utilising the leading-edge resources at UHN and St. Joseph's Hospital, he has been particularly impressed by the efforts of all their thoracic surgery teams, both in their roles as surgeons and teachers.

“They are all amazingly motivated, knowledgeable and bright,” elaborates Dr. Daddi. “Working with them has helped me widen my horizons, is enabling me to be a better surgeon and be helpful to the community.”

With a particular interest in neuroendocrine tumours – neoplasms that arise from cells of the endocrine nervous systems – Dr. Daddi is focusing on improving his professional knowledge and surgical skill. Upon completion of his fellowship in 2013, he plans on returning to Europe, bringing back the model of education he has experienced at the University of Toronto, along with advanced surgical techniques. “After all the experience I’ve gained,” says Dr. Daddi, “it is important to share the knowledge with other colleagues”.



Dr. Andreas Westerlind MD

Clinical Fellow, Cardiovascular Surgery

Dr. Andreas Westerlind is a well-respected specialist in cardiovascular surgery from Gothenburg, Sweden. He received his medical degree from the University of Gothenburg, and commenced training in the field of cardiovascular surgery in 2004. Upon completion of his residency in 2009, he gained valuable experience at the Lidköping Hospital, and – following a successful two-year stint – joined the Sahlgrenska University Hospital, which provides highly specialized care for West Sweden, and is one of the country’s six teaching research hospitals.

Recognizing the need for more innovative practices in cardiovascular surgery in his homeland, Dr. Westerlind took advantage of the opportunity to come to Canada and learn from some of the best cardiovascular surgeons in the world. “The complexity of surgeries undertaken at University Health Network provides fresh new perspectives on surgical techniques that I can use to greatly benefit patients in Sweden,” says Dr. Westerlind.

Dr. Westerlind has had the privilege of working with several distinguished surgeons at UHN, including Dr. Anthony Ralph-Edwards, Dr. Terrence Yau and Dr. Robert Cusimano. Additionally, his work with internationally renowned cardiovascular surgeons Dr. Chris Feindel and Dr. Tirone David at the Peter Munk Cardiac Centre has had a significant influence on his surgical skills, exposing Dr. Westerlind to complex surgeries and interventional procedures such as heart bypass surgery, valve repair, end stage heart failure, congenital heart conditions and thoracic aneurysms.

On his return to Sweden in July, 2012, Dr. Westerlind hopes to use this shared intellectual knowledge to revolutionize the surgical options available to cardiac patients. “In the intricate world of heart surgery, small details lead to big concepts, and the thinking behind these methodologies translates into creative surgical solutions,” he explains. “The UHN-Wilson Centre Fellowship training is a tremendous boost to my career, and I am excited to transfer this knowledge from Canada to Sweden.”



Dr. Ofer Ben-Bassat MD

Clinical Fellow, Inflammatory Bowel Diseases (IBD)

Born and raised in Haifa, Israel, Dr. Ofer Ben-Bassat obtained his MD degree cum laude from Semmelweis University of Medicine, Budapest, Hungary in 1999, and specialized in Internal Medicine and Gastroenterology at Israel's Rabin Medical Centre (RMC). Comprised of both Beilinson and Hasharon Hospitals, the RMC is one of the largest and most prominent medical facilities in the country.

Beginning his two-year clinical fellowship in Toronto in July, 2011, Dr. Ben-Bassat is working at Mount Sinai Hospital's Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) Centre; a centre of excellence working in collaboration with UHN and other hospitals in the Toronto area. First alerted to fellowship possibilities in Toronto through colleagues and the Internet, Dr. Ben-Bassat's clinical focus encompasses treating patients with complicated IBD cases from across Ontario and beyond, and participating in – as well as running – original clinical research projects.

Dr. Ben-Bassat is impressed by programs at UHN, Mount Sinai and the University of Toronto. "The University of Toronto's postgraduate fellowship programs have a great reputation back home," adds Dr. Ben-Bassat. "I see now for myself how everything is extremely well organized, with so many internationally graduated residents and fellows."

Once his fellowship is finished in July, 2013, Dr. Ben Bassat will be returning to work at the Rabin Medical Centre in Israel, where he looks forward to applying new fellowship skills to help treat the great numbers of Israeli patients afflicted with IBD.

Moving to Toronto with his wife and three children, Dr. Ben-Bassat's fellowship experiences have exceeded expectations, both professionally and personally. "The academic and professional environments are very inviting," he says. "Any adjustments happen very quickly, and this is one of the reasons why foreign physicians find it so attractive to come here."



Dr. Daniel Murninkas MD

Fellow in Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant

After earning his MD at the University of the Republic in his birthplace of Uruguay, South America, Dr. Daniel Murninkas moved to Israel to pursue the specialities of Internal Medicine and Cardiology at the University of Tel-Aviv, followed by work at Beilinson Hospital (at the Rabin Medical Centre), where his efforts encompassed the fields of Cardiology and Heart Transplant.

Combing the world for institutions offering advanced training in Heart Transplant and Mechanical Support led Dr. Murninkas to Toronto General Hospital, and discussions with Dr. Heather Ross, Director of the Cardiac Transplant Program. Subsequently Dr. Murninkas moved to Toronto in July, 2010, with his wife and three young children, and began his two-year fellowship.

Over the course of his fellowship, Dr. Murninkas has been very impressed with UHN's unique environment, and training in a completely new specialty. "I am learning a lot I couldn't learn in Israel," says Dr. Murninkas. "I am now managing advanced heart failure patients, transplant patients, and patients who need mechanical support."

Dr. Murninkas also praises the physicians he has collaborated with at UHN, including Dr. Ross, who he credits as being instrumental not only to his professional growth, but his family's transition to Canada. "From a professional point of view and from a personal point of view, she never says no," enthuses Dr. Murninkas.

While thrilled with the experience his family has had in Ontario, Dr. Murninkas is looking forward to applying his advanced training in Israel. In August, 2012, he returns to Beilinson Hospital, where he will work in the heart transplant program. Currently, the hospital is one of only two performing heart transplants in the country, with only two heart transplant physicians on staff. "This fellowship has been a gift not only for me," says Dr. Murninkas, "but for Israel too."



Dr. Daliah Galinsky-Tsoref MB BS, MA **Clinical Fellow, Medical Oncology and Palliative Care**

Moving from her hometown of Leeds, England, Dr. Daliah Tsoref pursued medical studies at Cambridge University, followed by three years at University College Hospital. After graduation, she immigrated to Israel, where her post-graduation work in medical oncology encompassed a six-year residency at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem.

Drawn by the opportunity of fellowships in both medical oncology and palliative care, Dr. Tsoref has relished the opportunity of being exposed to all the aspects of palliative care she wouldn't have had the opportunity to experience otherwise. Some of UHN's program leaders have also played an enormous part of her experience here – including Senior Staff Physician Dr Amit Oza, and Dr. Camilla Zimmerman, Head of UHN's Palliative Care Services.

With a focus on gynaecological oncology, Dr. Tsoref recognizes the opportunities that have been offered her at UHN, and has been struck by the support of colleagues in clinical research. "People here are invested in your personal needs," says Dr. Tsoref. "Assistance is tailored to the direction you want to go in, personally and professionally."

Moving back to Israel, Dr. Tsoref hopes to establish a palliative component in a local oncology department; a resource that is currently unavailable in the Israeli health care system. Influenced by her experience at UHN, she aims to merge palliative care in way that gives patients the best health care possible.

"My experience here has allowed me to see a huge number of cases," asserts Dr. Tsoref. "It would take 10 years to see these numbers of cases if I was working anywhere else."