

[Dr. Cheung and Dr. Hay receive bridge funding - CIHR Spring 2020 competition](#)

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Congratulations to Dr. Annette Hay, a Senior Investigator with the Canadian Cancer Trials Group and Dr. Matthew Cheung, Hematologist at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. Together they received \$100,000 in bridge funding in the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Spring 2020 competition.

The funding will partially support the planned study of the treatment of chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL), an incurable blood malignancy, and aims to compare the effectiveness of two ibrutinib dose strategies. Ibrutinib, while used to treat CLL, often results in negative consequences such as major bleeding and heart rhythm abnormalities. Recent work on dose reduction strategies confirmed that at lower doses these consequences are diminished, while the activity of ibrutinib can be fully maintained. This project will evaluate a lower dose (3-2-1 strategy) against full dose of ibrutinib, with the goal of reducing patients' side effects and treatment costs.

"This has been a great collaborative effort," says Dr. Hay. "We have had excellent input and support from multiple other collaborators, including patients."

Drs. Cheung and Hay, along with US collaborators Dr. Nitin Jain (MD Anderson Cancer Centre) and Dr. Sonali Smith (University of Chicago) led the design of the proposed trial. Ms. Marg Redlick, a member of CCTG's Patient Representative Committee, along with other members of the Patient Representative Committee guided the selection of outcomes of importance for this study.

Additional collaborators listed in the application include:

Co-Applicants: Dr. Bingshu Chen, Associate Professor of Biostatistics at Queen's University and CCTG Senior Biostatistician, is responsible for the statistical aspects of protocol design,

database management, and all analyses. Dr. Sarit Assouline is Co-Chair of CCTG's Hematology Site Committee and a senior trialist with a focus on leukemia. Dr. Anca Prica, Clinician Investigator at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, will oversee the quality of life analyses included in the proposal; Dr. Carolyn Owen, Associate Professor at the University of Calgary, is a leader in CLL research and guideline development in Canada; she will participate in protocol design. Dr. Versha Banerji, senior scientist at CancerCare Manitoba's Research Institute, has attained matching funds to complete correlative studies on the impact of sex and sex hormones on ibrutinib concentrations and metabolism. Dr. Alina Gerrie, Assistant Professor at the University of British Columbia, will lead enrollment in her province and plans correlative genomic studies.

Collaborators: Varsha Gandhi, PhD, is Professor and Department Chair of Experimental Therapeutics at the MD Anderson Cancer Centre and her initial pre-clinical work forms the foundation of this proposal. Dr. Lisa Chen, Assistant Professor at the MDACC, will lead correlative science studies included in this trial.