



MacGLOBAS

McMaster Global Health Office
Obstetrics & Gynecology | Anesthesia | Surgery



2021 Annual Report

Welcome

Welcome to our MacGLOBAS report. What can we say about this year? For a second year in a row, our attention has primarily been on home soil which represents a divergence from what we typically consider to be the focus of Global Health initiatives like ours. What has happened though is an interesting by-product of the global pandemic. The world has experienced the same health crisis collectively in real time. On one hand, it has brought us all closer together by sharing this common struggle and allowed us to embrace a new way of communicating and interacting on virtual platforms that may have a silver lining for future collaborations. On the other, it clearly highlights the inequities in basic health care and further worsened the access to surgical services which were already so perilous for millions.

As we emerge from COVID-19, MacGLOBAS will continue to direct our energy towards reaching our goals. MacGLOBAS strives to support faculty, clinicians, and trainees through educational opportunities, international partnerships and collaborating with a network of leaders and researchers in global health and surgery. We welcome you to the MacGLOBAS community and look forward to your participation.

- Dr. Carolyn Levis, MD, FRCSC
MacGLOBAS Director
McMaster University

Upcoming Event: MacGLOBAS Joint Rounds

25 May 2022 @ 0715

What: MacGLOBAS Annual Joint Rounds

When: May 25, 2022 0715 – 0800

Where: Online Via Zoom

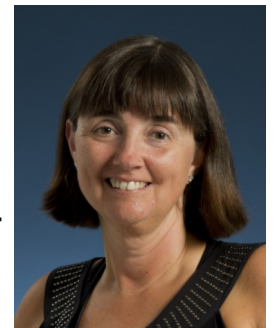
Who: Open to all; target audience faculty, clinicians, residents, and medical students—free to join

Info & Registration: Details will be posted on the [MacGLOBAS Website](#)



Recap: MacGLOBAS 2021 Fall Seminar

MacGLOBAS hosted its fall seminar in late November “Recharging Global Surgical Partnerships post-COVID” chaired by **Dr. Jean Chamberlain**, welcoming speakers from Canada, Guyana, and Uganda. **Dr. Laurie Elit** (top right image), Gynecologic Oncologist and Professor Emeritus from Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology at McMaster started the event defining Global Surgery and challenges addressing the global surgical burden. Dr. Elit shared her recent experience working in Cameroon, the impacts of COVID-19, and strategies for improving surgical capacity. This was followed by a presentation by **Dr. Pius Okong** (bottom right image), Director of Health Services and Obstetrician Gynecologist from Uganda. Dr. Okong spoke about his experience of global surgical partnerships in Uganda and lessons learned in adapting partnerships in the COVID-19 context. **Dr. Alexandra Harvey**



(bottom left image), Anesthesiologist and Director of Medical Education at the Institute of Health Science Education in Guyana, concluded the presentations reminding participants that most countries are not “post-covid” but instead this is a new normal we face. She described that COVID-19 has presented many new challenges for training medical professionals, however the experience also saw new innovations to improve surgical education. She challenged global partners to continue to support global surgical education development and learn from the experience of the pandemic. You can watch recordings of the event and presentations on [MacGLOBAS Youtube page](#).



Correspondence from the Field: Dr. Laurie Elit

“The service we render others is the rent we pay for our room on earth” Sir Wilfred Grenfell

Back in 2018, I had made a plan to leave my Hamilton Gynecologic Oncologist practice in Sep2020. My goal was to spend the last 5 years of my career providing gynecologic oncology care in underserved areas as a way of giving back to society for all the incredible blessing I had received in my lifetime. When I was in medical school (a very long time ago), I had received a Physician Services Incorporated award to work for a summer in High Level Alberta. Here I shadowed a group of family doctors as they met the health care needs of the Mennonite community, several Indian reserves and an oil rig community. I learned that lessons of global health begin with experiences gleaned in our own Canadian setting.

More recently, while serving in Mbongo Cameroon, I was asked if I could also help in Newfoundland. Due to a sabbatical, the team was on an extended time of 1 in 2 call which was becoming untenable. So, I spent my summer as a gynecologic oncologist in St. John's NFLD. However, I repeatedly heard about lack of access to healthcare across the province. Most Newfoundlanders who reside outside of a major city have no expectation of access to a nurse practitioner much less a family doctor. Thus they have no access to tests or pharmaceuticals. For any form of health care, they need to travel hours from their isolated coastal residence to a city hospital emergency room. Due to geography, telehealth is a standard of care here and it long pre-dates its popularity during COVID. As a result of lack of access to health care and poor nutrition, preventative issues like hypertension and diabetes are not well managed. Obesity rates are really high and access to bariatric medical or surgical management are limited. Cost of living in St. John's, NFLD is much higher than southern Ontario (ie., \$1.60/l gas, fruit and vegetables rot quickly, price specials in the grocery store seem to focus on potato chips and pop). What I saw in the clinic was part of a bigger reality. The Nova Scotia provincial elections took place this summer and a cornerstone issue involved the need for doctors, nurses and other primary care supporters. Actually in 2020, Newfoundland elected Dr. A. Furey, an orthopedic surgeon as their premier. It is not clear how the health care system will evolve in Atlantic Canada/NFLD & Labrador, suffice to say that health care personnel are desperately needed.

While in Newfoundland, I had the opportunity to take a 1000km road trip to St. Anthony's. This city is at the northern tip of the province. Back in 1892, Dr. Wilfred Grenfell, an English trained physician travelled to Newfoundland and Labrador under the

Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fisherman to improve the plight of coastal dwellers. St. Anthony's was his home. During his career he opened a number of hospitals, schools, orphanages, industrial work projects and co-operatives. It wasn't until 1970 that the health care system was turned over to the provincial health authorities. *Left image of Dr. Laurie Elit standing beside of statue of Sir Wilfred Grenfell.*



If you are considering any form of Global Health Care service, consider service for a time in your own country of Canada – not where all the amenities are present, but rather where the air is clear, the grass and trees are so very green (at least in the summer) and the wind never stops blowing. “Real joy comes not from ease or riches or from the praise of men, but from doing something worthwhile” Sir Wilfred Grenfell.

- Dr. Laurie Elit, MD MSc DTMH FRCS(C)

Professor Emeritus Dept Ob Gyn, McMaster University (aka Vagabond Gyne Oncologist)

Recap: MacGLObAS 2021 Joint Rounds

After postponing in 2020 due to the growing COVID-19 pandemic, in May, MacGLObAS hosted Dr. Dylan Bould, Anesthesiologist and Associate Professor from the University of Ottawa for its annual MacGLObAS Joint Rounds “Partnerships to develop capacity for Global Surgery and Anesthesia”. Dylan encouraged participants to hold on to the shock of the current crisis of COVID-19 across the globe and not let it be forgotten as increased vaccinations help to ease COVID-19's effect on life in Global North countries. Dylan highlighted examples of long-term partnerships in many countries with limited resources and the importance to develop capacity and strengthen health systems. The event was widely attended with over 75 participants from across Canada.

You can watch a recording of the Rounds on the [MacGLObAS Youtube page](#).





16 - 19 June 2022 “Decolonizing Global Surgery”

The University of British Columbia’s **Branch for International Surgery** will be hosting the annual Bethune Roundtable Global Surgery Conference, hosting virtually. The **Bethune Round Table (BRT)** is an annual interdisciplinary meeting aimed at addressing the challenges of providing accessible, high-quality surgical care to marginalized patients in low-resource settings. By bringing health professionals across a variety of disciplines together, we are able to share strategies and create solutions for improving surgical care to these under-served regions. **Abstracts now open, deadline April 15, 2022. Visit [UBC BISC website](#) for more details.**

MacGObAS Members in the News...

Dr. Brian Cameron was awarded the [2020 Royal College M. Andrew Padmos International Collaboration Award](#) in recognition of his contributions to global health and surgery by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. **Dr. Zahira Khalid** received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Institute of Health Sciences at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation in Guyana for her contributions to post-graduate medical education. **Dr. Khalid** was also awarded a 3-year [International Development and Collaboration grant through the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada](#), to develop a 1-year Clinical Education Fellowship in Guyana.

MacGObAS Leadership

A special thanks to our departing executive members for their dedication and support of global surgical activities at McMaster University and international partners: **Dr. Mark Osmond** (Ob/Gyn), **Dr. Anne Wong** (Anesthesia), **Dr. Brian Cameron** (Surgery). Dr. Cameron will continue on the executive as an ex-officio member.

Executive Committee :

Department of Anesthesia: **Dr. Joel Hamstra**, **Dr. Caitlin VanDeCappelle**

Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology: **Dr. Jean Chamberlain**, **Dr. Laurie Elit**,

Department of Surgery: **Dr. Margherita Cadeddu**, **Dr. Carolyn Levis (Director)**

Past Director & Ex-Officio member: **Dr. Brian Cameron**

Advisory Board :

Dr. Andrea Baumann (Assoc. VP Global Health), **Dr. James Paul** (Chair of Anesthesia), **Dr. John Barrett** (Chair of Obstetrics & Gynecology), **Dr. Mohit Bhandari** (Chair of Surgery), **Dr. Mark Crowther** (Chair of Medicine, IOP President)

Upcoming Events & Opportunities

28 March - 1 April 2022: [CUGH Conference](#) “Healthy People, Healthy Planet, Social Justice” (Virtual)

21 - 22 April 2022 Unite for Sight [Global Health & Innovation Conference](#) (Virtual)

25 May 2022 MacGObAS Joint Rounds

16–19 June 2022 [Bethune Roundtable Conference](#) (Virtual)

More details can be found on our website: macglobas.mcmaster.ca

We want to hear from you! If you have a story or opportunity related to Global Surgery, or you want to become involved with MacGObAS, email David Oldenburger at globas@mcmaster.ca.



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