
POGO RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Background

The Pediatric Oncology Group of Ontario (POGO) plans and coordinates childhood cancer services for Ontario and advises the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) on childhood cancer control. It is a multidisciplinary professional network, committed to dialogue, surveillance, research (quantitative and qualitative), policy development, and program evaluation. POGO addresses the development, organization, delivery and financing of childhood cancer control across the continuum of care within the province of Ontario. The organization also advocates on behalf of childhood cancer patients, their families and the professionals who care for them. Major components of current POGO activities include:

- a unique database on childhood cancer (POGONIS);
- a provincial program for the delivery of Pediatric Oncology Satellite care;
- a provincial system of Aftercare clinics for the surveillance, intervention and investigation of the late effects of childhood cancer;
- fundraising and events to support the POGO Chair in Childhood Cancer; and
- a research centre, *The POGO Research Unit* (PRU) whose mandate is to: stimulate and promote pediatric oncology research; engage in collaborative multi-disciplinary investigations of childhood cancer; conduct research in the areas of tracking and forecasting within the childhood cancer population; undertake program evaluations (including utilization of health care resources); and assess the burden of illness in the form of long-term health status and health-related quality of life.

POGO provides a stimulating, educational environment for multi-disciplinary and inter-institutional policy development and research. It is linked via its health sciences based partners to five Universities in Ontario and by a Chair in Childhood Cancer Control within the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto in Toronto, Ontario. Further information regarding POGO can be found at www.pogo.ca

The POGO Research Unit (PRU)

The PRU undertakes research activities that focus on specific priorities within the spectrum of cancer control in childhood. While the main objective at present is the cure of established disease, the ultimate aim is to identify and evaluate strategies for prevention. The combination of physical resources, technical skills and intellectual strengths will maximize the probability of success in minimizing the impact of cancer on children and their families, and on society at large. In this endeavor, the PRU engages in partnerships with agencies that are positioned to promote these aims.

The PRU promotes and actively sustains a collegial and supportive, inter-disciplinary environment which increases the quantity and quality of research in childhood cancer. These efforts improve communication and implementation of knowledge, resulting in informed policy development and enhanced delivery of care. The unit is committed to improving the care of children with cancer through research and evaluation of strategies that will diminish the morbidity and mortality associated with malignant diseases and their treatment. The PRU uses existing information and contributes to the generation of new knowledge in addressing this agenda.

Through current and future POGO research supported by the PRU, POGO hopes to achieve the following goals:

1. The creation of research expertise that can be utilized by investigators seeking consultation, advice and relevant expertise in developing research projects within the spectrum of childhood cancer control, and
2. The enhancement of research skills and output of all health disciplines in the childhood cancer community.

The POGO Research Unit (PRU) cont'd

These goals are embodied in the following research areas:

A. *Epidemiological Studies*

- i. Epidemiology, including environmental and molecular interactions, especially relating to those cancers of increasing incidence in childhood (e.g. malignant lymphomas and brain tumors)
- ii. Disease distribution by cluster analysis
- iii. Trends analysis and projections, notably in regard to the anticipated increment in incidence and projections for resource utilization
- iv. Disease, treatment, system and sociological determinants of clinical outcome e.g. time to diagnosis.

B. *Health Services Research*

Including but not limited to:

- i. Evaluation of innovative developments in health care delivery e.g. "shared care" and study of determinants of success of such programs
- ii. Evaluation of practice guidelines
- iii. Studies of knowledge transfer – from science into care and policy, from professional to public
- iv. Study of the application of new technologies to childhood cancer care.

C. *Health Economics*

Including but not limited to:

- i. Investigation of existing methodologies for estimation of monetary costs, and development and applications of new measures
- ii. Study of cost, cost effectiveness and cost benefit of differing forms of therapy for similar diseases
- iii. Studies of burden of illness on children and families
- iv. Comparison of care programs delivered in different settings, e.g. inpatient, outpatient, and community
- v. Measurement of health status and health-related quality of life during and after therapy.

**POGO Research Unit
(PRU) cont'd**

D. *Status of Survivors/Quality of Life*

- i. Evaluation of health outcomes
- ii. Identification and study of interventions intended to alter long-term health status including preventive strategies and health promotion interventions
- iii. Assessment of family coping and survivors' late effects

Dissemination of Knowledge

The PRU ensures a clear, regularly renewed and widely disseminated statement of current priorities in childhood cancer research and fellowship activities. In order to promote the prompt application of new information to the care of children with cancer, the PRU prepares regular accounts of progress in its areas of endeavor and presents these to the members of POGO, partners of the PRU, the scientific community and the general public through professional bodies, meetings and the media.

To enhance the PRU's mandate, goals and research agenda, POGO has recently established three research fellowships.

Fellowships

PhD/Post Doctoral Fellowships (two one-year fellowships)

These fellowships will be awarded to either an applicant working toward a PhD or to a Post Doctoral research candidate. While applicants may have training and/or experience in areas not directly related to POGO activities, they will be required to demonstrate relevance to pediatric oncology.

The award includes \$45,000 base salary plus 20% benefits.

Clinician Scholar Award (one two-year Clinical Fellowship)

This award is open to licensed clinicians and health practitioners of any discipline working in the field of pediatric oncology. Applicants may have limited research experience although they have a strong interest in research.

The award includes \$55,000 base salary plus 20% benefits.

Fellowships cont'd

Criteria

The applications will be awarded according to the following criteria:

1. Scientific merit and methodological rigor of the proposal
2. Relevance to the goals and objectives of POGO
3. Potential impact on children with cancer and their families (present and future)
4. Ability of the applicant to carry out the research project in accordance with POGO's standards and expectations
5. Clinical/academic potential
6. Suitability of the proposed research environment, including supervisor

While this fellowship is open to all Canadian residents, primary consideration will be given to Ontario citizens and landed immigrants within the province.

POGO Standards & Expectations

1. Fellowships may be completed in other institutions although fellows are required to spend no less than 10% of their time on-site at the POGO office, unless otherwise approved
2. Fellows will be asked to report on the progress of their work regularly
3. Fellows are expected to attend POGO meetings as required
4. The primary supervisor should be on staff at an Ontario University, teaching hospital or equivalent institution. If they are outside of Ontario, justification will be required
5. POGO will be acknowledged on all publications
6. POGO supports freedom of publication



Fellowships cont'd

Review Process

Applications will be reviewed by a six-member sub-committee of the PRU Research Committee. The members are a combination of recognized Pediatric Oncologists and associated disciplines, the Chair of the PRU Research Committee, POGO's Medical Director/POGO Chair in Childhood Cancer Control, and the PRU's Senior Associate Research and Planning.

Individuals who have recognized expertise in the area of study and who are not in any way involved with the project may also act as External Reviewers.

Contact

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