

### Publications of the Week

#### The Novel J-Domain Protein Mrj1 Is Required for Mitochondrial Respiration and Virulence in *Cryptococcus neoformans*

First Author: Linda Horianopoulos | Senior Author: Jim Kronstad (*back row, fifth from left*)  
mBio | Michael Smith Laboratories and UBC



The opportunistic fungal pathogen *Cryptococcus neoformans* must adapt to the mammalian environment to establish an infection. Proteins facilitating adaptation to novel environments, such as chaperones, may be required for virulence. The authors have identified a novel mitochondrial co-chaperone, Mrj1, necessary for virulence in *C. neoformans*. [Profile](#) | [Abstract](#)

#### Complete Mitochondrial Genome of a Gymnosperm, Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*), Indicates a Complex Physical Structure

First Author: Shaun Jackman | Senior Author: Inanc Birol (*pictured*)  
Genome Biology and Evolution | Canada's Michael Smith Genome Sciences Centre at BC Cancer



The authors have sequenced and assembled the complete 5.5 Mbp mitochondrial genome of Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*), to date one of the largest mitochondrial genomes of a gymnosperm. They sequenced the whole genome using Oxford Nanopore MinION, and then identified contigs of mitochondrial origin assembled from these long reads based on sequence homology to the white spruce mitochondrial genome. [Profile](#) | [Abstract](#)

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### Awards

#### Carolina Tropini Named a Johnson & Johnson Scholar in Highly Competitive Global Competition

UBC Life Sciences Institute



Dr. Carolina Tropini (*pictured*), an Assistant Professor in the School of Biomedical Engineering and the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at UBC, has been named as the winner of this year's Johnson & Johnson Women in STEM2D Scholars Award in the field of Engineering. The award provides US\$50,000 a year over a three-year period to outstanding female academic leaders working in science, technology, engineering, math, manufacturing and design. [Read More](#)

#### Winners of the DMCBH Innovation Fund Kickstart Research Grant Announced

Djavad Mowafaghian Centre for Brain Health



The Djavad Mowafaghian Centre for Brain Health (DMCBH) Innovation Fund Kickstart Research Grant is intended to help kick-start new research collaborations, directions, and technological developments. Dr. Annie Ciernia (*pictured*) is one of the recipients of the grant, which supports new projects that generate preliminary data for future grant applications to external funding agencies. [Read More](#)

#### Josef Penninger Awarded a UK-Canada Diabetes Research Team Grant

UBC Life Sciences Institute



UBC Life Sciences Institute Director Dr. Josef Penninger (*pictured*) and British colleagues have been awarded a UK-Canada Diabetes Research Team Grant to investigate the potential to reverse vascular changes caused by high blood sugar in artificial human blood vessels. Dr. Penninger will work with colleagues in the UK to assess two previously identified molecules, angiotensin-2 and apelin, to reverse changes caused by high blood sugar in human blood vessel organoids. [Read More](#)

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### Local News

#### New Test Paves the Way for Tailored Treatment of Deadliest Form of Ovarian Cancer

UBC Medicine



Dr. Aline Talhouk (*pictured*) and fellow researchers at the UBC Faculty of Medicine have led an international team in developing a new test to better diagnose different types of ovarian cancer — a tool that could one day guide and improve treatment options for women diagnosed with the most common and deadliest form of the disease. [Read More](#)

#### BCDRN Trainee Spotlight: Dominika Nackiewicz, PhD

BC Diabetes Research Network



The BC Diabetes Research Network (BCDRN) trainee profile this spring features Dr. Dominika Nackiewicz (*pictured*), a recent PhD graduate of UBC's Experimental Medicine Program. Dominika is an incredible scientist, mother and positive influence in the lab. Dominika shares the interesting story of how she came to finish her PhD in Dr. Bruce Verchere's laboratory in the Canucks for Kids Fund Childhood Diabetes Laboratories. [Read More](#)

#### New Paper from the McNagny Lab Reveals Mechanisms of Human Kidney Disease

UBC School of Biomedical Engineering



Dr. Kelly McNagny's (*pictured*) lab, whose current research is focused on stem cells and the underlying workings of immune response and chronic inflammation, has just published a new paper that offers exciting new avenues of inquiry for investigating the kidney disease focal segmental glomerular sclerosis (FSGS). In the paper, the team outlines how one bad copy of the stem cell gene, podocalyxin, can make mice highly sensitive to FSGS. [Read More](#)

#### Bold Therapeutics Expands COVID-19 Consortium

LifeSciences BC



Bold Therapeutics, a Vancouver-based clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company, has expanded its COVID-19 collaborations to include four more academic researchers: Drs. François Jean (*pictured*) and Ted Steiner from UBC, Dr. Stephen Barr from Western University, and Dr. Len Seymour from the University of Oxford. These new collaborations significantly expand Bold Therapeutics' COVID-19 consortium. [Read More](#)

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### Interesting Articles

#### Government of Canada Invests Almost \$500 Million in Science and Engineering

Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada



As part of this commitment to fundamental research, the Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, announced more than \$492 million in funding by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, through its Discovery research program. This funding will go to some 2,400 researchers across the country as they pursue research in a wide variety of natural sciences and engineering disciplines. [Read More](#)

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### Upcoming Events in Vancouver

June 24 10:00 AM	<b>STAT Webinar: Targeted Cancer Drugs: What's on the Market? What's in the Pipeline?</b> Online
June 25 9:30 AM	<b>Image Guided Therapeutics: From Conception to Commercialization</b> Online
June 25 10:00 AM	<b>McCarthy Spotlight Speaking Series: Non-Dilutive Funding Programs</b> Online
July 2 10:00 AM	<b>Stem Cells from the Sofa Speaker Series: Dr. Katie Cockburn</b> Online
July 12 1:30 PM	<b>Vancouver STEMminist Book Club Reads "Lab Girl!" by Hope Jahren</b> Online

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### Other Science Jobs in Vancouver

- Scientist, Product Development**  
Precision NanoSystems
- Partnerships Manager**  
UBC School of Biomedical Engineering
- Research Coordinator**  
Praxis Spinal Cord Institute
- Research Review Officer**  
Mitacs
- Research Assistant/Tech 3**  
UBC Department of Cellular & Physiological Sciences

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