

CSCC Award for Education Excellence
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Barry Hoffman



Dr. Barry R. Hoffman is this year's recipient of the CSCC Award for Education Excellence, recognizing his decades-long contributions to the training of young clinical chemistry postdoctoral fellows and medical residents at the University of Toronto. Dr. Hoffman has been a certified Clinical Biochemist for more than 30 years. He was born in Canada and received his Ph.D in Biochemistry at the University of Ottawa, moving on to obtain his diploma in Clinical Biochemistry at the University of Toronto. His professional designations include Assistant Professor in the Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathobiology, University of Toronto, and Head of Antenatal Genetics and Biochemical Screening in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, Mount Sinai Hospital. He has published extensively during his academic tenure—predominantly in the areas of chondrocyte metabolism, kallikrein cancer biomarkers, pathogenesis of breast cancer and prenatal screening for aneuploidy. Dr. Hoffman has also served as co-Editor on a number of special issues of journals focusing on cancer biomarkers and has been appointed co-Chair of several committees responsible for developing guidelines for the clinical use of tumor markers. His research interests currently include prenatal screening and the quest for biomarkers that better predict chromosomal abnormalities and adverse outcome of pregnancy.

One of his most influential roles in the world of clinical chemistry, however, involves his position as a Supervisor of the Six-Month Diploma Resident Rotation at Mount Sinai Hospital. In this role, he mentors students progressing through the program and organizes weekly Resident *Clinical Biochemistry Case History and Literature Critical Assessment Rounds* to help others to develop and maintain their knowledge case in both practical and theoretical aspects of Clinical Chemistry. For many years, Dr. Barry Hoffman has been the first teacher that Ph.D students entering the clinical chemistry training program at the University of Toronto have encountered. As a result, the task of providing a foundation in both the practical and in-depth scientific concepts relating to the profession has consistently fallen to him. Colleagues who subsequently take on the training of students who have worked with him speak very highly of the educational background he provides, and describe him as exceedingly dedicated and passionate. He is also interested and inspired by new technologies and techniques and is quick to incorporate them into the classroom. The teaching seminars he organizes are of exceptional quality and betray an adept understanding of the issues and questions most relevant to the study and practice of clinical chemistry.

Former students also offer considerable praise of his teaching, and can testify to his enthusiastic and patient approach to education. Fellows who have progressed through the program report that he welcomes questions and views every moment as an opportunity to impart new knowledge or discuss interesting scientific problems. He is described as highly generous with his time and is capable of spending countless hours with new students, helping them to grasp challenging concepts. One colleague has described him as highly devoted, willing to invest his time and energy into frequent long discussions with students. He is dedicated to helping students to achieve critical insight into the detailed and

advanced physiology behind tests and the chemistry underlying various methods. These particular insights would be incredibly difficult to grasp without the commitment of a person like Dr. Hoffman, willing to share his masterful understanding of the subject with others. His excitement and enthusiasm for the material is infectious and never appears to flag. Further, both his depth and breadth of knowledge appear limitless and are described as highly motivating, as they set the bar for the expansion of one's own knowledge base exceptionally high.

As one of the recent graduates rightly put it "the CSCC Education Excellence Award has reached its home in 2013." Congratulations Barry on a well-deserved award and thank you for the tremendous support and mentorship you have been providing our postdoctoral fellows, who now direct clinical laboratories across Canada coast to coast as practicing and successful clinical chemists.

Submitted by:

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