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# ELIXR25

Early-stage Lung cancer  
International eXpert Retreat

Retraite d'experts internationaux sur  
le cancer du poumon à un stade précoce

June 19-20, 2025

## Welcome Message

Welcome to the third annual international conference entitled **Early-stage Lung cancer International eXpert Retreat - #ELIXR25**. This conference aims to bring innovative minds together to foster education and inspire discussions aimed at practical clinical management considerations and our shared desire to improve outcomes for early-stage lung cancer patients through research. It is our hope that this conference will invite open discussion on basic, translational and clinical research programs, as well as spark future research collaborations, in order to make a difference in the diagnosis and treatment of early stage lung cancer patients.

## Organizing Committee Members

**Dr. Normand Blais**

Professor of Medicine, Université de Montréal

**Dr. Jonathan Spicer**

Associate Professor of Surgery, McGill University

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# Invited Faculty

# Dr. Mara Antonoff

## Thoracic Surgeon

University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

Dr. Antonoff completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Pennsylvania and earned her medical degree at the University of Minnesota, where she also completed internship and residency in General Surgery.

Dr. Antonoff completed a fellowship in Cardiothoracic Surgery at Washington University in St Louis. She joined MD Anderson in 2014, where she's currently an Associate Professor of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery and Program Director for Education. She is the Deputy Head of Education for Surgery.

Dr. Antonoff's research interests include pulmonary metastatic disease, early detection of lung cancer, and local consolidative therapy for stage IV lung cancer. She is the surgical lead for several trials evaluating the role of local consolidative therapy for metastatic non-small cell lung cancer. She holds several leadership roles in the STS, including chair of the STS Council on Member Engagement and its leadership Institute. She serves as the Vice President and President-Elect of the WTS. She further holds leadership roles within the AATS, the STSA, the AWS, IASLC, ESTS, and the TSDA, and Senior Editorial Board positions for Annals of Thoracic Surgery, Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery, Innovations, CTSNet, and Journal of Thoracic Disease.



# Dr. Houda Bahig

## Radiation Oncologist

Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Montréal

Dr. Bahig specializes in the treatment of lung, head and neck cancers, with an interest in the development of pragmatic clinical trials evaluating new technological approaches to personalize radiation therapy treatments.

She works on the development of algorithms using artificial intelligence to predict response and side effects of lung and head & neck radiation therapy. She is the principal investigator of the RESCUE trial, evaluating the role of adjuvant radiotherapy in stage III NSCLC in the neoadjuvant era.



# Dr. Tina Cascone

Thoracic Oncologist

University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center



Dr. Cascone is a Physician-Scientist and Associate Professor in the Department of Thoracic/Head and Neck Medical Oncology at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas.

She received her medical (summa cum laude) and doctorate degrees from the University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli in Naples, Italy. Dr. Cascone completed her postdoctoral studies at MD Anderson Cancer Center where she studied the impact of antiangiogenic therapy on the tumor microenvironment. Following her clinical residency in internal medicine at the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, she joined MD Anderson Cancer Center as a Clinical Fellow in Medical Oncology and later as an Instructor in the Cancer Medicine Advanced Scholar Program. She was then appointed Assistant Professor tenure-track in the Department of Thoracic/Head and Neck Medical Oncology at MD Anderson Cancer Center.

Dr. Cascone leads a basic laboratory and translational research program that focuses on identifying mechanisms of tumor response and resistance to immunotherapy. She also serves as PI on several clinical trials evaluating neoadjuvant and perioperative immunotherapies for patients with operable non-small cell lung cancer, including the NEOSTAR, NeoCOAST, NeoCOAST-2, and CheckMate-77T studies. Her research program is supported by multiple peer-reviewed grants and awards, including NIH/NCI MPI R01 grants and the Lung SPORE award, a Mark Foundation Endeavor award, the Lung Cancer Moon Shot Program and a Sabin Family Foundation Award. She uses information generated from preclinical models and patient-derived samples to identify predictive biomarkers of response and to develop novel therapeutic strategies. Dr. Cascone is a graduate of the MD Anderson Physician Scientist Program and a past recipient of an ASCO Career Development Award and an ASCI Young Physician Scientist Award. She has published widely in leading journals, including *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, *Cell Metabolism*, *Cancer Discovery*, *Nature Medicine*, and *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

# Dr. Nathalie Daaboul

**Hematologist-Oncologist**

**Hôpital Charles LeMoigne**

Dr. Nathalie Daaboul, MD, FRCPC is a hematologist-oncologist practicing at the Integrated Cancer Center of the Montérégie, at Hôpital Charles LeMoigne (in South-Shore Montreal, Quebec, Canada).

She has a thoracic oncology subspecialty from the University of Ottawa. Her current clinical areas of practice are in lung and upper GI cancers. She is interested in clinical research, medical education, and patient advocacy at regional / provincial and national levels. Most notably, she leads the RESOT (Quebec's Community of Practice for lung cancer research). She is also an associate professor at the Université de Sherbrooke.



# Dr. Sanja Dacic

**Anatomic & Thoracic Pathologist**

**Yale School of Medicine**

Dr. Sanja Dacic, MD, PhD, is the Professor of Pathology in the Department of Pathology at Yale School of Medicine. She is the Vice Chair and Director of Anatomic Pathology at Department of Pathology Yale School of

Medicine, and Director of Thoracic Pathology. Dr. Dacic is focused on diagnostic pulmonary and molecular pathology and has been involved in many basic and translational research projects in lung cancer and pleural mesotheliomas that have resulted in numerous peer-reviewed scientific articles, book chapters, and reviews. Dr. Dacic was a member of the Editorial Board for the 5th WHO Classification of Thoracic Tumors. She served as president of the Pulmonary Pathology Society (2019-2022). She is a current chair of the IASLC Pathology Committee (2023-2025).



# Dr. Julien Dahdah

**Thoracic Surgeon**

**St. Jerome Hospital**

Dr. Julien Dahdah is a thoracic surgeon serving as a regional head of division at CISSS des Laurentides Quebec. He accomplished his studies training among the most reputable institutions in France including Marie Lannelongue Hospital. He is leading the thoracic surgery program at St. Jerome hospital and has special interest to research and contributing in lung cancer biobank and multimodal surgical preadaptation.



# Dr. Marie-Hélène Denault

**Respirologist**

**Institut universitaire de cardiologie et de pneumologie de Québec**

Dr Marie-Hélène Denault is a Respirologist at Institut universitaire de cardiologie et de pneumologie de Québec (IUCPQ)– Université Laval. Her practice focuses on the investigation and management of thoracic malignancies. She is also the program director for the Adult Respirology residency training program at Université Laval as well as IUCPQ's thoracic oncology division co-head and clinical trials medical coordinator. Dr Denault completed her Respirology residency and a master's degree in Clinical Epidemiology at Université Laval. She did a two-year fellowship in thoracic oncology at BC Cancer, Vancouver (University of British Columbia). Her research interests include targeted therapies, immuno-oncology, peri-operative treatments, real-world outcomes and quality improvement.



# Dr. Arielle Elkrif

**Clinician Scientist**

Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal

Dr. Arielle Elkrif MD, FRCPC is a clinician-scientist and Assistant Professor in the Department of Oncology at the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal (CHUM). She was recruited to the CRCHUM

in 2023 and directs her research laboratory focused on the gut and tumor microbiome as a biomarker of response to immunotherapy. She is also co-Director of the CHUM Microbiome Centre where she leads microbiome-centered clinical trials combining microbiome interventions such as fecal microbiota transplantation (FMT), prebiotics, and diet. In addition, she contributed to establishing the negative impact of antibiotics on immunotherapy activity in patients with cancer. She was recently awarded the American Society of Clinical Oncology Young Investigator Award and the Society of Immunotherapy of Cancer-Melanoma Research Alliance Women in Melanoma Award.



# Dr. Patrick Forde

**Professor**

Trinity College Dublin

Dr. Patrick Forde treats patients with lung cancer, mesothelioma, and other thoracic cancers. He completed training in internal medicine and oncology in Ireland prior to undertaking a further fellowship at Johns Hopkins.

He has led development of a clinical-translational research program focused on the immuno-oncology of upper aerodigestive malignancies. Dr. Forde's research examines the role of immunotherapy for mesothelioma and lung cancer and his work has led to the development of several ongoing phase 3 trials. In 2022, his work over several years, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, led to the FDA approval of neoadjuvant chemo-immunotherapy for the treatment of surgically operable lung cancer.





# Dr. Andrew Giles

Thoracic Surgeon  
Queen's University

Dr. Giles completed medical school at Queen's University and General Surgery Residency at McMaster University. He obtained a Master of Public Health with a global health focus at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health during residency. Dr. Giles subsequently completed Thoracic Surgery Residency at the University of Manitoba and the Advanced General Thoracic Surgery Fellowship at the Mayo Clinic. Dr. Giles's clinical areas of focus are minimally invasive and robotic surgery and combined modality treatment for locally advanced thoracic malignancy. Research interests include perioperative outcomes, quality improvement, and improving access to care.



# Dr. Salma Jabbour

Radiation Oncologist  
Rutgers Cancer Institute

Dr. Salma Jabbour is Professor, Vice Chair of Clinical Research and Faculty Development in Radiation Oncology, and Associate Director of Faculty Affairs and Development at the Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey.

Dr. Jabbour's clinical practice and research focus on lung cancers and gastrointestinal malignancies and she is the Lead Thoracic and GI Radiation Oncologist. Dr. Jabbour's clinical research resulted in many influential publications in major journals. She has authored over 240 articles and numerous book chapters and monographs. She served previously as the Senior Editor for the International Journal of Radiation Oncology, Biology and Physics (IJROBP) and Deputy Editor of the IJROBP. She participates in multiple ASTRO committees and was selected as Fellow of ASTRO. She also participates in the Big Ten Cancer Research Consortium Steering Committee and is Chair of the Scientific Review Board at the Rutgers Cancer Institute as well as Leader of the Radiation Oncology Disease Specific Group which she founded. Dr. Jabbour leads and participates in many pivotal clinical trials involving combinations of systemic therapy and radiation therapy. She is the Principal Investigator of international studies including KeyNote-799 investigating chemoradiation and immunotherapy in Stage 3 lung cancer.



## Dr. Kevin Jao

**Medical Oncologist**

**Hôpital du Sacré Coeur de Montréal**

Dr Jao is an adjunct professor at the Université de Montréal and a hemato-oncologist at the Hôpital du Sacré Coeur de Montréal. He is the medical oncology lead of the thoracic oncology team.



He has a master's degree in Immunology and HIV from McGill University. He went on to obtain his medical degree from the Université de Montréal, and specialized in internal medicine, hematology and medical oncology. He completed a fellowship in thoracic oncology at the Princess Margaret Cancer Center.

He is the current director of research in hematology and oncology at Sacré Coeur Hospital and co-chair of the Lung Cancer Canada medical advisory committee.

## Dr. Philippe Joubert

**Pulmonary pathologist**

**Quebec Heart & Lung Institute**

Dr. Philippe Joubert is a thoracic pathologist and researcher at the Institut Universitaire de Cardiologie et de Pneumologie de Québec, Université Laval. He is an associate professor at the Faculty of Medicine of Université

Laval and the deputy director of the Department of Molecular Biology, Medical Biochemistry, and Pathology. He holds the Canada Research Chair in the Identification of Diagnostic and Prognostic Markers in Lung Cancer. He is also a member of the staging committee of the International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASLC) and co-leads the working group on molecular and histological parameters with prognostic impact in lung cancer. His research program focuses on lung cancers, specifically the development of predictive and diagnostic biomarkers in adenocarcinomas and neuroendocrine tumors.



# Dr. Geoffrey Liu

Medical Oncologist

Princess Margaret Cancer Centre



Dr. Liu graduated sum laude from the University of Toronto medicine program, followed by residencies at the University of Toronto and a fellowship at the Dana Farber Harvard Cancer Center in Boston. He was

Assistant Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School before returning in 2006 to the Ontario Cancer Institute–Princess Margaret Hospital. Dr. Liu's major research focus is in molecular prognostic factors and pharmacogenomics of lung and esophageal cancer, with additional interest in head and neck, pancreatic, ovarian and testicular cancers, mesothelioma and thymoma.

Trained in clinical and molecular epidemiology, he is the principal investigator of over three dozen completed, ongoing and upcoming cancer pharmacogenomic and molecular epidemiologic analyses of cancer observational studies and clinical trials funded by the National Cancer Institute (US), National Cancer Institute of Canada Clinical Trials Group, Canadian Cancer Society Research Institute, the Canadian Institute of Health Research, the Ontario Institute of Cancer Research, Cancer Care Ontario, Doris Duke Foundation and the Lung Cancer Foundation of America.

He has research interests in epidemiological outcomes database methods, novel analyses of high dimensionality biologically rich data, pharmacogenomic analyses of conventional and molecularly targeted agents using primary human xenograft models, patient-reported outcomes in pharmacogenomics, and knowledge translation of personalized medicine and pharmacogenomic algorithms into clinical practice.

# Dr. Anna McGuire

Thoracic Surgeon

Vancouver General Hospital



Dr. McGuire is an Advanced Thoracic Fellowship Trained active staff thoracic surgeon at Vancouver General Hospital and the University of British Columbia. Dr. McGuire is a successful researcher with specialty interests in lung cancer, esophageal cancer, minimally invasive surgical technology (keyhole surgery), diseases of the thymus, esophageal function and other surgical diseases of the chest.

Dr. McGuire's current research projects focus on lung cancer including, biomarkers, and thoracic surgical epidemiology.

After graduating from the University of Toronto School of Medicine, Dr. McGuire completed a general surgery residency at Queens University, thoracic surgery residency and advanced thoracic surgery fellowship at the University of Ottawa, and Master of Science in Clinical Epidemiology with the University of London (LSHTM). Since this time, Dr. McGuire returned home to Vancouver, and has been on faculty at the University of British Columbia and Vancouver General Hospital as a Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada board certified academic thoracic surgeon.

# Dr. Barbara Melosky

Medical Oncologist

BC Cancer Centre

Dr. Barbara Melosky is a Professor of Medicine at the University of British Columbia and a Medical Oncologist in Vancouver at BC Cancer. She graduated from medical school at the University of Manitoba and did a residency in internal medicine and an oncology fellowship at the University of British Columbia.



Dr. Melosky specializes in the field of thoracic malignancies and sits on the Executive Lung Site Committee for Canadian Clinical Trials Group (CCTG). She chairs the annual Canadian Lung Cancer Conference attended by over 450 participants, for the last 24 years.

Dr. Melosky is proud to have built the British Columbia Lung Cancer Biobank which is actively used for research for all interested. She is published extensively and is considered a national and international expert in thoracic malignancies.

# Dr. Jarushka Naidoo

Medical Oncologist

Royal College of Surgeons Ireland



Dr. Jarushka Naidoo is the Professor of Medical Oncology at RCSI University of Health Sciences and a Consultant Medical Oncologist at Beaumont Hospital, specializing in lung cancer, clinical trials and immunotherapy. She trained in Medicine at Trinity College Dublin (graduation: 2006) and completed her internal medicine training through the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, followed by Higher Specialist Training in medical oncology through the Irish College of High Medical Training via RCPI, in 2012.

Dr. Naidoo completed an awarded advanced medical oncology fellowship at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Centre in New York (US Ranking #1 Cancer Centre worldwide) in Thoracic Oncology and Phase I Immunotherapy under the mentorship of Jedd Wolchok and Naiyer Rizvi from 2013-2015.

After this, she became an Assistant Professor and Attending Physician at Johns Hopkins University in the Thoracic Oncology Division from 2015-2020. During this time, Dr. Naidoo won an NIH K12 Award, IASLC Young Investigator Award, and completed a Masters in Biostatistics and Clinical Investigation from Johns Hopkins University. In 2020, Dr. Naidoo returned to Ireland and won the Irish Cancer Society's Clinician Research Leader Award in 2021. In 2022, she was promoted to Full Professor of Medical Oncology and is currently the national lung cancer chair for Cancer Trials Ireland and lead the clinical research programme focused on lung cancer, at Beaumont Hospital and RCSI University of Health Sciences (Beaumont RCSI Cancer Centre).

# Dr. Neal Navani

**Respirologist**

**University College London Hospital**

Dr. Neal Navani qualified in Medicine from Cambridge University and UCL in 2000 with distinction and several University prizes. He trained in Respiratory Medicine at the Brompton and Hammersmith Hospitals before winning a Medical Research Council Fellowship in 2008 and completing his PhD at UCL in 2011. He has also completed an MSc in Clinical Trials and Biostatistics at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.



Professor Navani is lead clinician for the lung cancer service at UCLH, and senior clinical lead of the National Lung Cancer Audit. He is also Clinical Director for the Centre for Cancer Outcomes for the North Central London Cancer Alliance. He is on the steering committee of the British Thoracic Oncology Group, UK Lung Cancer Coalition and on the Thoracic Oncology committee of the American Thoracic Society. Professor Navani currently holds >£2.5m of grant funding as chief investigator including a CRUK grant for the early diagnosis of lung cancer, a separate CRUK grant for developing novel methods for cancer data collection and NIHR funding for studies on predicting lung cancer prognosis with artificial intelligence and early detection of lung cancer in never smokers. He is an author of current NICE guidelines on lung cancer and bronchoscopy and co-chair of the BTS guideline on nodule management as well as a US guideline on peripheral bronchoscopy. He has over 150 peer-reviewed publications. In 2020, Dr Navani won a prestigious MRC / NIHR fellowship to research predictors of cancer in lung nodules and was appointed to Professor of Respiratory Medicine at UCL in 2024.

# Dr. Cecilia Pompili

**Thoracic Surgeon**  
**University Hospital**

Dr. Pompili is Associate Professor in Psychosocial Oncology and Honorary Thoracic Surgeon at University Hospital in Hull, UK. She is Visiting Associate Professor at the University of Leeds.



After completing her general thoracic surgical residency in Italy, Dr. Pompili obtained a PhD from the University of Leeds with a project investigating the Role of Patients Reported Outcomes (PROMS) In Risk Assessment and Treatment Outcomes for Early-Stage NSCLC. Her research focuses on two areas: a) patient-centred and personalised care for thoracic malignancies and b) evidence-based practice in lung cancer surgery with particular interest in risk-stratification and postoperative morbidities.

Dr. Pompili is recognized as founder of the European Society of Thoracic Surgeons (ESTS) Patient-Centred Working Group leading a European Quality of Life App project for thoracic surgical patients. She is active member of the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC) Quality of Life Group and ISOQOL, working on initiatives to implement PROMs in clinical practice.

She holds national and international leadership roles in the ESTS Women in General Thoracic Surgery Committee, the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, the British Thoracic Oncology Group. She has been recently elected co-chair of the IASLC Diversity and Inclusion Taskforce.



# Mr. Duncan Preece

## Patient Advocate

President, ALK-Positive Canada

Duncan Preece has an initial background in health sciences with a specialization in clinical oncology at Europe's top cancer hospital, the Royal Marsden, in London. He subsequently worked for many years for a large European University Hospital, the Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Vaudois (CHUV) in Lausanne, Switzerland, chiefly as the head of international medical personnel recruitment and retention. He also worked as a management consultant for EY for several years.



Duncan was diagnosed with stage 4 ALK Positive lung cancer in 2018 and is still on his original TKI. He took up advocacy at ALK Positive Inc (API) in the US and is a current member of the Board of Directors, as well as of several committees. Noting the absence of a similar organization in Canada, he made contact with a number of Canadian patients and instigated the founding of ALK Positive Canada (APC). This organization was incorporated in January 2025 under a federal charter.

# Dr. Atocha Romero

## Cancer Biologist

Puerta de Hierro Hospital

Dr. Atocha Romero is a Laboratory Medicine specialist who holds a Ph.D. in Molecular Biology from Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Presently, Dr. Romero serves as the director of the Liquid Biopsy Laboratory (LBL), from the medical Oncology Department, at Puerta de Hierro Hospital, in Madrid. The LBL provides diagnostic services and undertakes research in the field of cancer biomarkers. Her research predominantly centers on the applicability of liquid biopsies in lung cancer patients in routine oncology as well as in the context of clinical trials. Her research has consistently secured funding through competitive public grant calls. With over 90 publications in international journals to her name, she has also overseen multiple theses and holds accreditation from ANECA as an assistant professor.



# Dr. Bertrand Routy

Hematologist-Oncologist

Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal



Dr. Bertrand Routy MD, PhD is a clinician-scientist and associate professor in the department of hemato-oncology at the CHUM (University of Montreal). Upon his recruitment to the CRCHUM in 2018 after completing

his PhD with Pr. Laurence Zitvogel, Dr. Routy quickly established himself as the scientific director of the CHUM Microbiome Centre where he began his work to develop novel microbiome-based therapeutics in oncology.

His work contributed to the discovery of the gut microbiome as a novel prognostic biomarker for immune checkpoint inhibitors (ICI) in various cancers. He characterized the deleterious impact of antibiotic-related gut dysbiosis on ICI outcomes, which led to pivotal changes in clinical oncology practice. Moreover, he demonstrated that modulation of the microbiome by fecal microbiota transplantation, probiotics, and prebiotic supplementation had the potential to circumvent ICI resistance. His team currently leads several microbiota-centered trials in oncology ranging from phase I to phase II trials, with the aim of decreasing primary ICI resistance.

Dr. Routy is internationally recognized as a leader in the microbiome field with more than 17,700 citations including publications in *Science*, *Nature Medicine* and *Annals of oncology*, and h-index of 43. Moreover, his unending commitment to improving immunotherapy responses in cancer patients has led to several awards from prestigious societies, including the FRQS 2023 Junior 2 ranked #1, the *Prix de la Relève Scientifique du Québec* in 2022 and the 2021 Gairdner Foundation award.

# Dr. Boris Sepesi

## Thoracic Surgeon

HCA Health One / Sarah Cannon Cancer Network

Dr. Boris Sepesi, MD, FACS is a board-certified surgeon, certified in general surgery and thoracic surgery with extensive expertise and experience in the comprehensive treatment of thoracic and upper

gastrointestinal oncological diagnoses, specifically lung cancer, esophageal cancer, gastric cancer, chest wall tumors, tracheal and airway tumors, thymomas, thymic carcinomas, mesothelioma and other thoracic oncological diagnoses.

His research interests include immunotherapy, targeted therapy, chemotherapy and clinical trials, as well as team building and multi-disciplinary care of complex thoracic oncology patients.



# Dr. Stephanie Snow

## Medical Oncologist

QEII Health Sciences Centre

Dr. Stephanie Snow is a staff Medical Oncologist at the QEII hospital in Halifax, Nova Scotia, treating thoracic and GI malignancies. After pursuing undergraduate training at McGill, she completed her training at Dalhousie, where she is now a full professor in the Faculty of Medicine.



Dr. Snow has a strong interest in Medical Education and is Vice Chair of the Royal College Medical Oncology Examination Board. From a research perspective she is involved in clinical research, is Associate Editor of the peer reviewed journal Current Oncology and has been widely published in prominent journals. Finally, Dr. Snow is active in-patient advocacy, serving as the current President of Lung Cancer Canada, and sits on the medical advisory committees of several other patient advocacy groups in colorectal and gastric cancer.

# Dr. Jillian Tsai

**Radiation Oncologist**

**Princess Margaret Cancer Centre**

Dr. Jillian Tsai is a Staff Radiation Oncologist at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre and Associate Professor in the Department of Radiation Oncology at the University of Toronto. She leads the Allan and Ruth Kerbel

Palliative Radiation and Oligometastases Program (PROP). She also serves as the Medical Director of Princess Margaret Cancer Registry. Prior to joining Princess Margaret Cancer Centre in September 2022, she practiced radiation oncology at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City from 2014 to 2022. Dr. Tsai completed residency training at MD Anderson Cancer Center after receiving her MD degree from Vanderbilt University. In addition, she holds a PhD degree in Cancer Epidemiology from Stanford University. Her research interests include biomarker-driven clinical trials and population-based studies.

Dr. Tsai is a recipient of several prestigious grants and awards, including the Eleanor Montague Distinguished Resident Award in Radiation Oncology by American Association for Women Radiologists, Steven A. Leibel Memorial Award by American Society for Radiation Oncology, and Till and McCulloch Paper of the Year at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre.



# Dr. Arthur Vieira

Thoracic Surgeon

University of Montreal

Dr. Arthur Vieira specializes in the treatment of lung cancer and mediastinal malignancies, with a focus on modern minimally invasive surgical techniques, including the uniportal (single-port) and subxiphoid approaches.

He is also dedicated to advancing lung cancer staging through the use of endobronchial ultrasound (EBUS) and endoscopic ultrasound via the bronchus (EUS-B).

In addition to his clinical work, Dr. Vieira is actively involved in multicenter research projects that evaluate new multimodality treatments and assess real-world outcomes in lung cancer care. His commitment to improving patient care extends beyond the operating room, as he continuously works to elevate the standards and accessibility of lung cancer treatment in his region.

In collaboration with the respirology department at Mauricie-et-Centre-du-Québec, Dr. Vieira co-founded a new initiative in 2025—a foundation dedicated to raising awareness about the rising incidence of lung cancer. The foundation also aims to support the acquisition of innovative technologies to improve diagnosis and treatment.



# Dr. Henning Willers

Thoracic Radiation Oncologist  
Massachusetts General Hospital



Dr. Henning Willers, MD, FASTRO, is the Director of the Thoracic Radiation Oncology Service at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) and he also directs the Radiation Biology & Research Program. He obtained his M.D. from the University of Hamburg Medical School in Germany in 1994. After two years of residency training in radiation oncology in Germany, he came to Boston to work as a research fellow on DNA repair in the laboratory of Simon Powell, MD, PhD. He completed his residency training in radiation oncology at the MGH in 2005. As a clinician-scientist, Dr. Willers has a busy clinical practice focusing on the care of patient with thoracic cancers of various types while focusing on novel therapies for KRAS-mutant and EGFR-mutant lung cancer in the laboratory. Dr. Willers has also uncovered biological properties of proton radiation that potentially can be therapeutically exploited. He has dedicated his career to radiation biology research and education and is currently serving as the Biology Section Editor for the Red Journal. His overarching goal is to advance precision radiation medicine that combines the latest in biological therapies with high-precision radiation therapy to increase the likelihood of cure without complications for patients with lung cancer.

# Dr. Wenzhao Zhong

Thoracic Surgeon

Guangdong Lung Cancer Institute

Dr. Wenzhao Zhong is the Director of Guangdong Lung Cancer Institute, and Chief Physician of Thoracic Neoplasms Surgery in Guangdong Provincial People's Hospital, Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China.



He is the doctoral supervisor of School Of Medicine, South China University Of Technology and Southern Medical University.

He performs over 1000 minimally invasive surgeries of lung cancer per year and has undertaken four national projects supported by the National Natural Science Foundation of China.

Relevant researches have been published in Lancet Oncol, J Clin Oncol, J Thorac Oncol, Transl Lung Cancer Res, Nature Communications, NPJ Precision Oncology, Cancer, Oncologist, Lung Cancer, ATS/JVCTS/EJCTS, Ann Surg Oncol, BMC Cancer, Clin Lung Cancer and Cancer Lett.

# Abstract Presenters

## Meghan De Meo

**PhD candidate**

**McGill University**

Meghan is currently a PhD candidate in Dr. Jonathan Spicer's laboratory. She graduated with a bachelor's in science, majoring in Microbiology & Immunology at McGill University. Meghan fast tracked into the PhD program and is about to submit her initial thesis and aims to defend her PhD in August.



## Dr. Nadia Ghazali

**Medical Oncologist**

**Princess Margaret Cancer Centre**

Dr. Nadia Ghazali is an Australian-trained Medical Oncologist currently completing a two-year fellowship at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre in Toronto, Canada. Her fellowship focuses on thoracic oncology, with additional experience in gastrointestinal and genitourinary cancers. During this time, she has gained extensive clinical experience and expanded her research portfolio in precision medicine, liquid biopsy, and real-world outcomes. She has a strong interest in global oncology and is involved in multi centre collaborative research in sub-Saharan Africa, exploring the molecular and demographic profiles of lung cancer in the region. She also serves as a Young Committee Member of the International Society of Liquid Biopsy. Dr. Ghazali is now preparing for the next phase of her career in academic oncology, with a focus on precision medicine and thoracic oncology.





# Edmond Rafie

Internal Medicine Resident

Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal

Edmond Rafie is a PGY2 in Internal Medicine and resident at the CHUM Microbiome Centre. He is passionate and committed to advancing cancer care through the optimization of cutting-edge technologies, with a particular focus on the microbiome and its modulation for beneficial therapeutic outcomes.



# Dr. Laura Staunton

Cardiothoracic Registrar

St. James Hospital

Dr. Laura Staunton achieved her undergraduate medical degree from RCSI in 2020. She subsequently completed her internship, where she was awarded an intern medal for research. She accomplished her Master of Surgery (MCh) through RCSI in 2023. On completing core surgical training, she graduated MCRSI in 2024. She is keen to promote women in surgery and in medical school was co-founder of the first European student chapter of the Association of Women Surgeons (AWS). She is co-founder and co-president of AWS Ireland, established to promote, support and provide a networking platform for women in surgery in Ireland. She was involved in organizing and chairing AWSI's first conference, in April of this year. She is currently working as a Cardiothoracic Registrar in St James's Hospital, Dublin. She is undertaking an MD in the Trinity Translational Medicine Institute and St James's Hospital, Dublin, Ireland with PI's Dr Kathy Gately and Mr Gerard Fitzmaurice. Her research involves profiling the perioperative immune response of patients undergoing lung cancer resection, which is supported by the Royal City of Dublin Hospital Trust.



# Riccardo Taje

**Thoracic Surgery Resident**

**Tor Vergata University**

Riccardo Taje is a last year thoracic surgery resident at Tor Vergata University in Rome. He spent most of his residency at the National Cancer Institute in Rome where he developed a strong commitment to research in lung cancer. Particularly he investigated early-stage lung cancer and the prognostic and clinical implications of genetic alteration in image0.jpeg these populations. Riccardo is currently at the McGill General Hospital Research Institute to improve his skills in clinical and translational research.



# Dr. Raphael Werner

**Junior Attending Surgeon**

**University Hospital Zurich**

Dr. Werner is a junior attending surgeon and surgeon-scientist at the Department of Thoracic Surgery of the University Hospital Zurich. His clinical and translational research efforts focus on early- to advanced stage (oligometastatic) non-small cell lung cancer with current projects evolving around molecular disease profiling, ex-vivo models and liquid biopsies.



# Program

# Day 1: Thursday June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**8:30 am** Breakfast and Registration

**9:30 am** Welcome message

## Section 1 9:35 am – 11:30 am

**Lung cancer staging: Where have we been and where are we going?**

*Moderated by: Drs. Pierre-Olivier Fiset and Jonathan Spicer*

**9:35 am** History of lung cancer staging and a vision for the future Dr. Philippe Joubert, IUCPQ, Quebec, QC

**9:50 am** To B or not to TNMB, that is the question! Is liquid biopsy the future of staging? Dr. Anna McGuire, Vancouver General Hospital, Vancouver, BC

**10:05 am** Is %RVT the new ypTNM? Dr. Sanja Dacic, Yale School of Medicine, New Haven, CT

**10:20 am** Neoadjuvant TKI and surgery: For whom and when? Dr. Wenzhao Zhong, Guangdong Lung Institute, Guangdong, China

**10:35 am** When mets disappear, does stage still matter? Dr. Mara Antonoff, MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX

**10:50 am** How do we define high-risk clinical stage I when SBRT is the modality of choice? Dr. Salma Jabbour, Rutgers Cancer Institute, New Brunswick, NJ

**11:05 am** Questions and Panel Discussion

**11:30 am** Break, followed by lunch



## 12:30 pm **Merck Sponsored Lunch Symposium**

### **Novel Systemic therapeutic rationales in the curative setting**

Dr. Bertrand Routy, McGill University, Montreal, QC

### **Opportunities for synergy between radiation and systemic therapies across the stage spectrum**

Dr. Salma Jabbour, Rutgers Cancer Institute, New Brunswick, NJ

### **Re-imagining the surgical mindset in the swift current of emerging new options**

Dr. Mathieu Rousseau, McGill University, Montreal, QC

### **Followed by Q & A**

*Moderated by: Dr. Jonathan Spicer*

## **Section 2** 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm

**One case, many solutions!**

**The stochastic nature of the multi-disciplinary team.**

### 1:30 pm **Breakout**

**Group 1:** Drs. Geoffrey Liu, Jillian Tsai, Arthur Vieira

**Group 2:** Drs. Kevin Jao, Andrew Giles, Houda Bahig

**Group 3:** Drs. Nathalie Daaboul, Julien Dahdah, Bassam Abdulkarim

**Group 4:** Drs. Jason Agulnik, Boris Sepesi, Salma Jabbour

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### 2:30 pm **Share back session**

*Moderated by: Drs. Neal Navani and Normand Blais*

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### 3:00 pm **Frenemies: Neoadjuvant vs Perioperative IO for resectable stage II and III NSCLC**

*Moderated by: Drs. Houda Bahig and Sara Najmeh*

**Pro Perioperative:** Dr. Tina Cascone (15 mins)

**Pro Neoadjuvant:** Dr. Patrick Forde (15 mins)

*Panel Discussion 30 mins*

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### 4:00 pm **Closing words for Day 1**

### 6:00 pm **Closed Faculty Dinner**

# Day 2: Friday June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025

## Section 3 10:30 am – 12:00pm

Focus on the patient experience.

Moderated by: Drs. Stephanie Snow and Barbara Melosky

**10:30 am Special Presentation:  
Announcing the 2025 Lung Ambition Awards Recipients**

**Speakers:**

- Dr. Stephanie Snow – President, Lung Cancer Canada
- Brian Seguin – Head, Lung Cancer, AstraZeneca Canada

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**10:40 am A patient’s perspective on what matters** Mr. Duncan Preece,  
ALK + Canada

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**11:00 am How do we build assessment tools to capture the impact of care in early-stage lung cancer?** Dr. Cecilia Pompili,  
Leeds University, UK

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**11:20 am The long-term impact of systemic treatment for patients with early-stage lung cancer** Dr. Jarushka Naidoo,  
Royal College of Surgeons Ireland,  
Dublin, Ireland

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**11:40 am Panel Discussion**

**12:10 pm Lunch Served**

**12:30 pm BMS Sponsored Lunch Symposium****Bridging the gap: Turning guidelines into action for resectable NSCLC**

Drs. Jarushka Naidoo, Dublin Ireland, Jason Agulnik, Montreal, QC, Pierre-Olivier Fiset, Montreal, QC, Dr. Andrew Giles, Kingston, ON, Houda Bahig, Montreal, QC

**Learning Objectives:**

- Discuss consensus and controversies in the current guidelines;
- Identify practice gaps in the treatment of patients;
- Obtain expert opinion on real world experience.

**Section 4 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm****New concepts in early-stage lung cancer.**

*Moderated by: Drs. Jonathan Cools-Lartigue and Marie-Hélène Denault*

**1:30 pm How to create synergy between radiation and systemic therapy?**

Dr. Henning Willers,  
Massachusetts General Hospital,  
Boston, MA

**1:50 pm Robotics and AI applications in thoracic surgery**

Dr. Wenzhao Zhong,  
Guangdong Lung Institute,  
Guangdong, China

**2:10 pm The gut microbiome and its impact on neoadjuvant chemo-immunotherapy**

Dr. Atocha Romero,  
Hospital Universitario Puerta  
de Hierro, Madrid, Spain

**2:30 pm Panel Discussion**

## Section 5 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm

New science from young talent!

Moderated by: Drs. Arielle ElKrief and Bertrand Routy

<b>3:00 pm</b>	<b>KRAS inhibition to overcome neutrophil-mediated immunosuppression</b>	Meghan De Meo, McGill University Health Center, Montreal, Canada
	<b>Analysis of outcomes in resected early-stage NSCLC with rare targetable driver mutations</b>	Dr. Nadia Ghazali, University Health Network, Toronto, Canada
	<b>Molecular characterization of lung adenocarcinoma presenting as subsolid nodules in a real-life single center cohort</b>	Riccardo Taje Tor Vergata University, Rome, Italy
	<b>Exploring the effect of surgery on T-cell function in patients with early stage NSCLC</b>	Dr. Laura Staunton, Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery, Saint-James Hospital, Dublin, Ireland
	<b>The Tumor-draining pulmonary vein: a promising source for circulating tumor DNA in resected NSCLC</b>	Dr. Raphael Werner, University Hospital Zurich, Switzerland
	<b>The real-world Montreal experience of neoadjuvant chemo-immunotherapy for patients with resectable NSCLC</b>	Edmond Rafie, Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Montréal, Montreal, Canada

**Questions and Discussion**



**4:00 pm Break**

**4:15 pm Tumour board Olympics**

*Moderated by: Drs. Normand Blais and Jonathan Spicer*

**Team Canada**

Drs. Andrew Giles, Geoffrey Liu, Houda Bahig

**Team USA**

Drs. Henning Willers, Boris Sepesi, Sanja Dacic

**Team Europe**

Drs. Patrick Forde, Cecilia Pompili, Jarushka Naidoo

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**5:00 pm Closing words #ELIXR25**

**6:00pm ELIXR Closing Dinner**

Club St. James

1145 Union Ave

Montreal, Quebec H3B 3C2



*Photos from ELIXR2024*

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### January 2021

Indicated as adjuvant therapy after tumour resection in patients with stage IB-III<sup>a</sup> NSCLC whose tumours have EGFR exon 19 deletions or exon 21 (L858R) substitution mutations.

- A validated test is required to identify EGFR mutation-positive status prior to treatment.



### October 2020

In combination with etoposide and either carboplatin or cisplatin, is indicated for the first-line treatment of adult patients with ES-SCLC.



### July 2018

Indicated for the first-line treatment of patients with locally advanced (not amenable to curative therapies), or metastatic NSCLC whose tumours have EGFR exon 19 deletions or exon 21 (L858R) substitution mutations (either alone or in combination with other EGFR mutations).

- A validated test is required to identify EGFR mutation-positive status prior to treatment.



### May 2018

Indicated for the treatment of patients with locally advanced, unresectable, Stage III NSCLC whose disease has not progressed following platinum-based chemoradiation therapy.



### July 2016

Indicated for the treatment of patients with locally advanced or metastatic EGFR T790M mutation-positive NSCLC whose disease has progressed on or after EGFR TKI therapy.

- A validated test is required to identify EGFR T790M mutation-positive status prior to treatment.



### December 2003

Indicated for the first-line treatment of patients with locally advanced (not amenable to curative therapy) or metastatic NSCLC who have activating mutations of the EGFR-TK.

#### For more information:

Please consult the Product Monographs at [www.astrazeneca.ca/content/dam/az-ca/downloads/productinformation/tagrissso-product-monograph-en.pdf](http://www.astrazeneca.ca/content/dam/az-ca/downloads/productinformation/tagrissso-product-monograph-en.pdf), [www.astrazeneca.ca/content/dam/az-ca/downloads/productinformation/imfinzi-product-monograph-en.pdf](http://www.astrazeneca.ca/content/dam/az-ca/downloads/productinformation/imfinzi-product-monograph-en.pdf) and [www.astrazeneca.ca/content/dam/az-ca/downloads/productinformation/iressa-product-monograph-en.pdf](http://www.astrazeneca.ca/content/dam/az-ca/downloads/productinformation/iressa-product-monograph-en.pdf) for contraindications, warnings, precautions, adverse reactions, interactions, dosing, and conditions of clinical use. The Product Monographs are also available by calling us at 1-800-668-6000. EGFR=epidermal growth factor receptor; ES-SCLC=extensive-stage small cell lung cancer; NSCLC=non-small cell lung cancer; TK=tyrosine kinase; TKI=tyrosine kinase inhibitor.

<sup>a</sup>According to American Joint Committee on Cancer (7<sup>th</sup> edition)

**References:** 1. TAGRISSO<sup>®</sup> Product Monograph, AstraZeneca Canada Inc. January 2, 2024. 2. TAGRISSO<sup>®</sup> Notice of Compliance, January 18, 2021. 3. IMFINZI<sup>®</sup> Product Monograph, AstraZeneca Canada Inc. December 27, 2023. 4. IMFINZI<sup>®</sup> Notice of Compliance, October 2, 2020. 5. TAGRISSO<sup>®</sup> Notice of Compliance, July 10, 2018. 6. IMFINZI<sup>®</sup> Notice of Compliance, May 4, 2018. 7. TAGRISSO<sup>®</sup> Notice of Compliance, July 5, 2016. 8. IRESSA<sup>®</sup> Product Monograph, AstraZeneca Canada Inc. March 31, 2021. 9. IRESSA<sup>®</sup> Notice of Compliance, December 17, 2003.

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