Looking to the future: Addressing the health concerns of youth today

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Pediatric medicine is a broad field of medicine that encompasses the care of neonates, infants, children, adolescents, and even young adults. At these various milestones and life stages, numerous unique health challenges present themselves; it is therefore no surprise that there exists an increasing number of recognized pediatric subspecialties in Canada and across the globe. These emerging subspecialties include pediatric rheumatology1, anesthesiology2, critical care medicine3, and child maltreatment4.

This UBC Medical Journal (UBCMJ) issue brings together a wide array of exciting featured articles that aim to address several emerging trends and ideas that drive the way we are practicing pediatric medicine and care for the health needs and concerns of youth. We begin with a compelling commentary from Dr. Barbara Fitzgerald, a developmental pediatrician and Medical Director at the Alderwood Family Development Centre. In her piece, Dr. Fitzgerald shines a light on the socioeconomic disparity for children, the subsequent health consequences, and the role that she—and all other physicians—must fulfill as health advocates for their young patients. Next, we have an article written by Dr. Suzanne Vercauteren, a clinician–investigator and Director at the B.C. Children’s Hospital BioBank. Dr. Vercauteren illustrates the workflow of a “biobank”, its role in translational and clinical research, and the inception of Canada’s first pediatric site–wide biobank here at B.C. Children’s Hospital. Our final featured article comes from Dr. Kirk Schultz, Director of the Michael Cuccione Childhood Cancer Research Program at the B.C. Children’s Hospital. Dr. Schultz begins with a historical overview and the mechanisms underlying cancer immunotherapies, and highlights the role of B.C. Children’s Hospital as a world leader in hematopoietic stem cell transplantation. Finally, he describes the use of chimeric antigen receptor T cells as an emerging therapy as well as new leukemia and neuroblastoma immunotherapy clinical trials that are underway in British Columbia.

During the preparation of this issue, the UBCMJ was contacted by the B.C. Cancer Agency’s Journal of Family Practice Oncology. We were approached about sharing two articles that pertain to our theme on medicine of youth, and describe recent changes in the way that the care of neonates, infants, children, adolescents, and even young adults. At these various milestones and life stages, numerous unique health challenges present themselves; it is therefore no surprise that there exists an increasing number of recognized pediatric subspecialties in Canada and across the globe. These emerging subspecialties include pediatric rheumatology1, anesthesiology2, critical care medicine3, and child maltreatment4.

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