

Grand Plenary Speakers



CSCN Gloor Lecture

Eva Feldman

University of Michigan Health System | Michigan, USA



Throughout her career, Dr. Eva Feldman has made it her mission to use scientific discoveries to understand and cure human diseases. In January 2008, Dr. Feldman was named the first Director of the A. Alfred Taubman Medical Research Institute, which was created to support fundamental research into a wide range of human diseases.

In her own work, Dr. Feldman is on the forefront of applying stem cell research to human disease. Most notably she is the Principal Investigator of the first clinical trial of intraspinal transplantation of stem cells in patients with ALS. She is the author of more than 220 articles, 50 book chapters and 2 books. She is the Principal Investigator of 4 major National Institutes of Health research grants, 3 private foundation grants and 5 clinical trials focused on understanding and treating neurological disorders, with an emphasis on ALS and diabetic neuropathy. She is President of the American Neurological Association and recent Past President of the Peripheral Nerve Society.

Dr. Feldman has received many honors including the Early Distinguished Career Award from the University of Michigan, several scientific achievement awards in the field of diabetes and in May of this year, was elected to the Johns Hopkins Society of Scholars. Additionally, she has been listed in Best Doctors in America for 10 consecutive years.

CACN Tibbles Lecture

Kate Bushby

Newcastle University | United Kingdom, Europe



Kate Bushby is a clinical academic with joint appointments between Newcastle University and the NHS.

She is a member of the Neuromuscular Research Group within the Institute of Genetic Medicine and plays a leading role in the National Commissioning Group service for rare neuromuscular diseases.

Together with Professor Straub, Professor Bushby co-ordinated the TREAT-NMD network (now TREAT-NMD Alliance) for accelerating therapy development in neuromuscular diseases and she is vice president of the EU Committee of Experts on Rare Diseases.

Professor Bushby has a long-standing interest in the molecular genetics of the limb-girdle muscular dystrophies and related disorders and is interested in the best possible development and implementation of care guidelines as well as clinical trials.

Her team has developed an extensive programme of research in NMD from basic molecular pathology to clinical studies.

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CNS Richardson Lecture

Donald Weaver

Dalhousie University | Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada



Dr. Donald F. Weaver's research is focused on three disease states: protein misfolding disorders (Alzheimer's, Parkinson's), epilepsy and peripheral neuropathy.

As part of their drug design targeting protein misfolding, Dr. Weaver's group initially addressed Alzheimer's disease and identified a new receptor, BBXB, which is found in both β -amyloid and tau proteins, and is central to their aggregation process. Using this model, their recent work has identified a compound, NCE 217, which has simultaneous activity against the misfolding of both the β -amyloid and tau proteins. This discovery is being labelled a major breakthrough in Alzheimer's disease and was awarded the American Health Foundation Centennial Award in 2007 and the Prix Galien Canada Award in 2009.

His epilepsy drug-design program has designed and developed 390 beta-alanine analogues that have been screened for antiepileptogenic activity. No such drugs are currently available. His laboratory has patented one agent with promising antiepileptogenic activity, which is now in preclinical development. His peripheral neuropathy program focuses on natural products active against sodium channels.

Dr. Weaver's work has been recognized internationally.

CNSS Penfield Lecture

Charles Branch

Brain Tumor Center of Excellence, Childress Institute, Pediatrics Childress Institute | North Carolina, USA



Doctor Branch is the Professor and Chairman, Department of Neurosurgery at Wake Forest University School of Medicine. A renowned international lecturer, Dr. Branch also has published 20 book chapters and over 40 manuscripts in peer reviewed journals. He has served on the editorial board of the Journal of Radiosurgery, Neurosurgical Focus, and Journal of Spinal Disorders. He recently completed his tenure as Editor-in-Chief of The Spine Journal, the official journal of the North American Spine Society. In addition, Dr. Branch has served as the Chair of Wake Forest University Physicians and serves as a member of Governing Board of the School of Biomedical Engineering of Wake Forest University and Virginia Polytechnic Institute.

Dr. Branch's interests have focused on the treatment of spinal diseases and injuries, and brain tumors. He is also a pioneer in the development of spinal fusion techniques and technologies that are recognized and used by spinal surgeons worldwide. He has been awarded 13 patents recognizing these unique fusion techniques and minimally invasive technology.

In November 2009, Dr. Branch completed his service as President of the North American Spine Society, the largest multidisciplinary spine society in the world. He served as the Chair of the American Board of Neurological Surgery from May 2010 through 2011. Most recently he received the Meritorious Service Award from the Joint Section on Disorders of the Spine and Peripheral Nerves of the AANS and CNS.

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CANN Guest Lecture

Sean Clarke

RBC Chair in Cardiovascular Nursing Research | Toronto, Ontario, Canada



Sean Clarke, RN, PhD, FAAN, is a health services researcher and nurse educator specializing in health policy and hospital safety issues. He was named the inaugural Susan E. French Chair in Nursing Research and Innovative Practice and the Director of the McGill Nursing Collaborative for Education and Innovation in Patient and Family Centred Care, effective July 1, 2012.

The McGill Collaborative is a unique initiative designed to increase synergies between practice, research and teaching between the School of Nursing and McGill-affiliated hospitals and to build new local, national and international collaborations that capitalize on the rich and unique opportunities for clinicians, researchers and leaders in nursing in Montréal and Québec. After completing his master's and PhD education at McGill and advanced clinical and research training at the University of Pennsylvania, he taught and managed research groups at both the University of Pennsylvania and University of Toronto for over a decade.

From 2008 to mid-2012, he held a research chair in cardiovascular nursing endowed by the RBC Foundation that involved a joint appointment between the Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing at the University of Toronto and the University Health Network system of teaching hospitals. He is currently active in scientific journal editing in nursing and health services research and in the peer review of grants for national competitions in Canada, the U.S. and beyond and holds affiliate appointments at the Université de Montréal and the University of Hong Kong.