

DEPARTMENT OF IMMUNOLOGY



NEWSLETTER

VOL XII – ISSUE V

JUNE 2024



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dr. Jen Gommerman

My dentist asked me if I was looking forward to “my term off”. It’s funny how there is a perspective that research stops in July. We all know that research never stops. Nonetheless, I do hope that all of you will take some time out to re-charge. The Ontario summer is fleeting.

I am happy to share some of the recent accomplishments earned by our community. Please join me in congratulating **Drs. Sarah Crome** and **Brian Coburn** on their promotions to Associate Professor! That’s a big one! In addition, one of our own – former PhD student **Dr. Pailin Chiaranunt** (Mortha Lab) has won the prestigious Schmidt Fellowship. Check it out in the [Globe and Mail](#)! The top training awards have also been secured by our trainees including **Mahdieh Golzari-Sorkheh** (JCZP lab) who won a Vanier and **Dr. Kevin Champagne-Jorgensen** (GommerLab) who won a Banting. Congrats to all trainees who have secured extramural funding. We also celebrate **Dr. Naoto Hirano**, who has been awarded the Amgen Chair in Cancer Research and the Princess Margaret team for infusing their first patients with a novel JAK/STAT CAR T Cell Therapy. Translational Immunology is where we are at **right now** – and it’s thrilling to see. To underscore the importance of this new frontier, I am so grateful that **Dr. Pam Ohashi** has agreed to step up to be our first ever Associate Chair in Translational Immunology. I am thankful for all of the work that our **Associate Chairs** do for the Department. A special shout-out to **Dr. Matt Buechler** who will be stepping up to serve as Associate Chair in Wellness, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity. Please share your achievements with me so I can share the news with everyone.

As I write this, we are not quite through our qualification exams. I want to recognize the hard work our 2nd year students have done in preparing for this big test. Thank you to the faculty who have stepped up to review proposals and evaluate the oral exams – it is a critical moment in the training of our next generation of scientists. I also want to congratulate our 4th year undergraduate students and graduate students who will convocate in the next weeks.

We had a very engaging and well-attended OQUIC symposium May 9-10. Thank you to **Catherine Chi** and **Josh Janevski** who did a stellar job organizing. The keynote speakers were yours truly and **Dr. Samantha Gruenheid**, the first female Chair of Microbiology/Immunology at McGill. Sam and I enjoyed bookending each other and interacting with the students who delivered excellent seminars. Speaking of excellent seminars, we have heard some truly outstanding talks from our students this year, including the 1st year seminar day. Thank you, **Dr. Berger**, for helping our students develop their science communication skills – it shows!

We have some very important events coming up, all squeezed into one intense week of Immunology Goodness. First, we have our **annual post-doc day**, on June 10th from 12 pm to 5 pm in MSB 2170. Not only will we get to hear scientific talks from some of our most talented post-docs, but we will hear from the winner of the BD postdoctoral prize – **Dr. Tapas Mukherjee** (Philpott lab). Thanks BD Biosciences for your continued generosity!

We will also be celebrating the career of our beloved Professor **Michael Ratcliffe** who is retiring on June 13th. Thank you, Mike, for your dedicated service as a scientist, a mentor, a Department Chair and a Dean (Trinity). You have touched many lives and made our community richer. Time for you to kick back – Ohhhhkay?

Last, but not least, we have our **40th Anniversary** on June 14th. This event is SOLD OUT! I am very excited to see some of my old friends who were my own classmates from when I was a student. Those relationships are very special.

The next time I send a newsletter it will be during the rush of Fall Term. I don’t really want to think about that right now. But do the **Save the Date for the Fall IGSA Retreat September 15-16** at Fern Resort. This is AFTER the CIHR deadline – no excuse not to join. Our Keynote speakers will be **Drs. Chris Hunter** (UPenn) and our very own alum **Dr. Laura Snell**.

Have a safe and happy summer everyone!

Jen

BD Biosciences Immunology Post doc award lecture and Post/doc RA Research Day

June 10, 2024

Room 2170 MSB, 12-5PM

Noon-12:30 Boxed Lunch / Networking

Talks are 20 minutes plus 5 discussion or 7 minutes +3 discussion as indicated; Presenter is underlined

Session 1.

12:30 Vinothkumar Rajan, Christina R Lee, Juan Carlos Zúñiga-Pflücker, Navigating Lineage Options: A Data-Driven Quest to Uncover T Cell Fate Decision Trajectories (**20 minutes +5**)

12:55 Alicia G. Aguilar-Navarro, Gibran Edun, Anastasia N. Tikhonova. Obesity-Induced Changes in Bone Marrow Microenvironment and Immune cell Interactions (**7 minutes plus 3**)

1:05 Mark Gower, Ximing Li, Alicia G. Aguilar-Navarro, Brian Lin, Minerva Fernandez, Gibran Edun, Mursal Nader, Vincent Rondeau, Andrea Aruda, Anne Tierens, Anna Eames Seffernick, Petri Pölönen, Julliette Durocher, Elvin Wagenblast, Lin Yang, Ho Seok Lee, Charles Mullighan, David Teachey, Marissa Rashkovan, Cedric S. Tremblay, Tomer Itkin, Sanam Loghavi, John E. Dick, Gregory Schwartz, Maria Agustina Perusini, Hassan Sibai, Johann Hitzler, Tanja A. Gruber, Mark Minden, Courtney L. Jones, Igor Dolgalev, Soheil Jahangiri, Anastasia N. Tikhonova. IRF5 defines a new high-risk inflammatory T-lineage acute lymphoblastic leukemia subtype (**20 minutes +5**)

1:30 Kyle Burrows, Louis Ngai, Edward Chen, Pailin Chiaranunt, Siu Ling Tai, Manjula Kamath, Juan Carlos Zúñiga-Pflücker, and Arthur Mortha, Epithelial-derived notch signals drive tissue specific adaptations in intestinal group 2 innate lymphoid cells (**20 minutes +5**).

1:55- 2:15 Coffee/tea/cookies

Session 2.

2:15 Janna R. Shapiro, Shelly Bolotin, Nathalie Simard, and Tania Watts. Development of a sample-sparing method to measure vaccine-induced cell-mediated immunity (**7+3**)

2:25 Nuria Alvarez-Sanchez, Thomas A. Heaney, Josephine Gomes, Brendan Cordeiro, Jeeyoon J. Ahn, Tae Joon Yi, Monan Angela Zhang, Shannon E. Dunn. Cellular mechanisms behind the female bias in central nervous system autoimmunity (**20+5**)

2:50 Georgina A Craig, Keon Arbabi, Luise Seeker, Jamie Rose, Steven Mitchell, Jessica Thapar, Colin Smith, Tara Spires-Jones, Simon Cox, Shreejoy Tripathi, Anna Williams, Véronique Miron. Oligodendrocyte accumulation drives human cognitive decline . (**20 minutes+5 discussion**)

3:15 Ikbel Naouar, Andrei Pangan, Michelle Zuo, Kevin Champagne-Jorgensen, Adam Groh, Angela Wang, Annie Pu, Lesley Ward, Shoshana Spring, Bruno Cenni, Barbara Nuesslein-Hildesheim, John Sled, Jo Anne Stratton, Jeffrey Browning, Valeria Ramaglia*, Jennifer Gommerman* A brain penetrant Bruton's tyrosine kinase inhibitor prevents meningeal inflammation and subpial cortical injury in CNS autoimmunity via the Lymphotoxin pathway (**20 minutes+ 5 discussion**)

3:40- 4 Break

4-5 PM BD Immunology PDF award lecture-award presented by Scott Hayes, BD Biosciences

Tapas Mukherjee (Philpott/Girardin Labs) NOD-ing off Crohn's Disease-associated manifestations

NEWSLETTER



Special Thanks to Our Generous 40th Anniversary Sponsors!

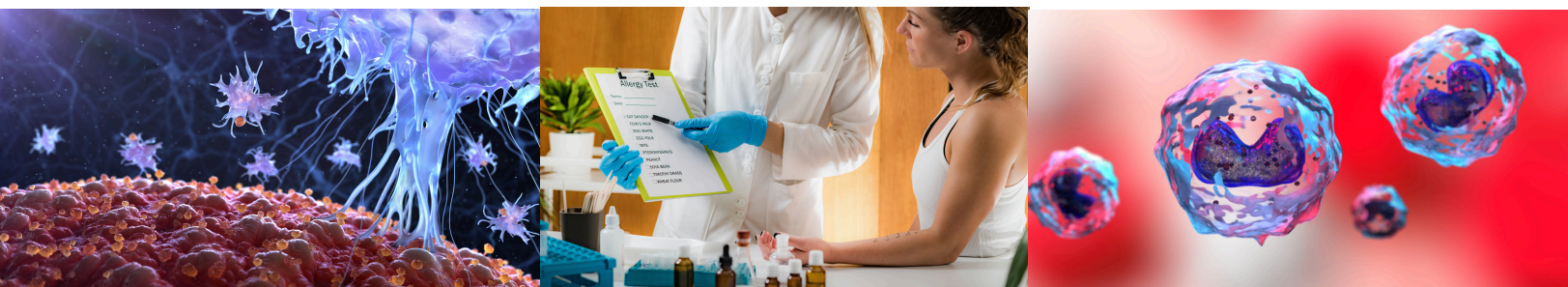
We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our esteemed sponsors for their unwavering support and commitment to the Department of Immunology. Your generosity has played a pivotal role in making the 40th-anniversary symposium and evening celebration a success. It is through your partnership and dedication that we are able to reach new heights and make a positive impact on our community.

The 40th-anniversary symposium and evening celebration are sponsored by:

GOLD LEVEL SPONSOR:



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DEPARTMENT OF IMMUNOLOGY FALL RETREAT 2024

SAVE THE DATE

Sept 15th-16th, 2024

Fern Resort (4432 Fern Resort Rd, Ramara, ON L3V 0Z1)

More Details To Be Announced Soon!

Opening Keynote



Laura Snell, PhD

- Assistant Professor of Microbiology & Immunology, Indiana University School of Medicine

Closing Keynote



Christopher Hunter, PhD

- Mindy Halikman Heyer Distinguished Professor of Pathobiology, University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine
- Penn Institute for Immunology, Penn Institute for Immunology



Immunology
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



UPCOMING DEPARTMENT SEMINARS

Special Seminars

June 13, 2024 | 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM | Hybrid | MSB 3278
(Zoom details available via email)

Dr. Catherine Larochelle
Director, Clinician-Researcher Program, Medicine,
Université de Montréal
Clinical Associate Professor, Neuroscience, Université
de Montréal
Clinician Researcher, Centre hospitalier de l'Université
de Montréal

Talk Title: Investigating T cell-glia cell interactions in
MS and EAE
Host: Jen Gommerman, PhD

July 3, 2024 | 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM | Zoom only (details
available via email)

Dr. Bruno Silva-Santos
Professor, and Director of Immuno-Oncology
Faculty of Medicine, University of Lisbon

Talk Title: Gamma-delta T cells in cancer
immunotherapy
Host: Dr. Pamela Ohashi

PhD Research Seminar

June 13, 2024 | 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM | Hybrid | MSB 3278
(Zoom details available via email)

Alex Florescu

Talk Title: Investigating B cells in Compartmentalized
and Peripheral Inflammation During Central Nervous
System Autoimmunity

Supervisor: Dr. Jen Gommerman

PhD Research Seminar

July 4, 2024 | 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM | Hybrid | MSB 7231
(Zoom details available via email)

Scott Lien

Talk Title: Investigating T cell phenotypes associated
with clinical response to PD-1 blockade

Supervisor: Dr. Pamela Ohashi

PDF/RA Seminars

3:30 PM - 5:00 PM | MSB 7231 | Titles TBD

Mu Kaiwen (Croitoru Lab) - July 3, 2024

Sami Mamand (Martin Lab) - July 3, 2024

Anthony Altieri (Buechler Lab) - August 7, 2024

Ikbel Naouar (Gommerman Lab) - August 7, 2024

Oludada Opeyemi (Ehrhardt Lab) - September 4, 2024

Valerie Ramaglia (Gommerman Lab) - September 4, 2024



UPDATES FROM EDUCATION OFFICE

GRADUATE PROGRAM UPDATE

Congratulations PhD Grads!

Dr. Priya Makhijani (Winer lab) – April 10, 2024

Dr. Yu Xuan (Tina) Luo (Spaner lab) – April 12, 2024

Congratulations PhD Qualifiers!

Xinyu Wei (Hirano lab) – May 13, 2024

Erika McCartney (Buechler lab) – May 14, 2024

Mohammad Khakpoor Koosheh (Martin lab) – May 14, 2024

Mahdieh Golzari-Sorkheh (Zúñiga-Pflücker lab) – May 16, 2024

Jacob Johnson (Wang lab) – May 21, 2024

Maye Cheng (Buechler lab) – May 24, 2024

Alex Lac (Epelman lab) – May 24, 2024

Jinny Tsang (Kaul lab) – May 28, 2024

And more to come...

Welcome to our new Advanced Standing Applied Immunology MSc students!

Mary Addo (Tsui lab)

Catherine Chi (Gommerman lab)

Yinhan Dechi Castro (Mortha lab)

Melina Kaltagian (Martinu lab)

Martin Nguyen (Maxson lab)

Aryan Regmi (Rojas lab)

Alan Ren (Philpott lab)

Numa Sayeed (Gommerman lab)

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM UPDATE

Research Opportunities

We are now accepting applications for our 2024–25 Fall-Winter research courses, IMM385 and IMM450. See [our website](#) for details!

Immunology Summer Student Research Program

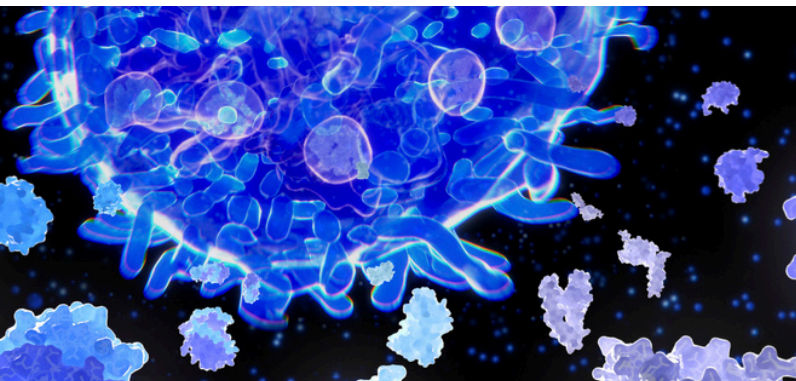
Like last year, our 2024 ISSRP participants will be showcasing their work via a poster session and select oral presentations. Stay tuned for details. We look forward to seeing you there!

POSTDOC EVENTS

June 10, 2024 – IMM Postdoctoral Research Day – MSB 2170

We are looking forward to our [2nd annual Immunology Postdoctoral Research Day](#) on Monday June 10th from 12:00-5:00pm.

The research day will feature 9 short talks from our postdocs, including from the winner of the 2024 BD Biosciences Immunology Postdoctoral Award, Dr. Tapas Mukherjee!





UPDATES FROM IGSA

Hello fellow Immunologists!

As we welcome in the summer vibes of June, we hope everyone has exciting plans for the weather and is taking a moment to enjoy the sunshine!

Firstly, we want to take a moment to wish all the second year Fundamental Immunology students good luck in their upcoming reclassification/qualification exams into their PhDs. Our mentorship representative Melissa has been organizing practice sessions to help with feedback and advice. Wishing everyone the best for the exams!

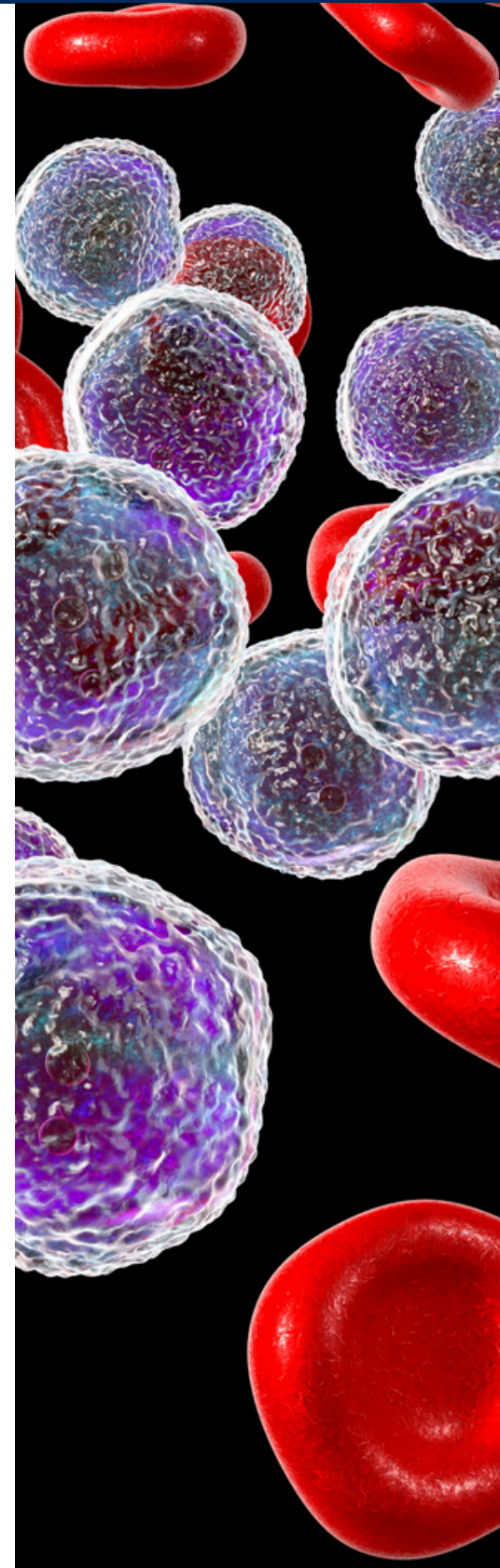
As a recap of previous events, last month we held an interdepartmental trivia night in collaboration with the LMP and MBP departments, as well as a karaoke event! We hope everyone who showed up had a wonderful time, and we have more events planned for the summer.

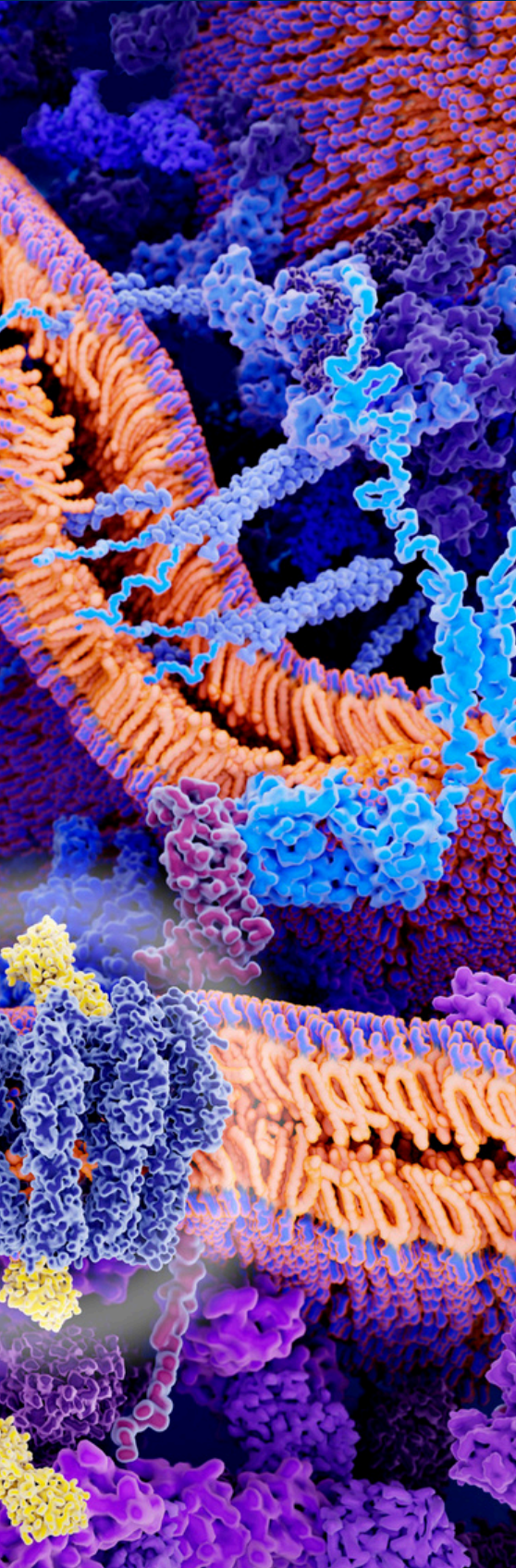
In the spirit of collaboration, for the summer session our intramural team is banding together with the LMP department to form a volleyball team - the Pathological Immunologists! If you are interested in joining our intramural team, feel free to contact either our Sports Rep Michelle, or us directly!

For those of us who are eager to take advantage of the weather, IGSA will be organizing our annual Scarborough Bluffs hike! Make sure to come and join us on an exciting journey, with amazing views of Lake Ontario to provide an escape from academic stresses. Additionally, we are also in the midst of organizing a Toronto Island picnic/trip! Keep your eyes peeled for signups as the events are scheduled to happen mid-June!

Finally, we also want to share that our summer retreat is occurring again in person this year September 15-16 at the Fern Resort! More information will be coming in preparation for our annual departmental tradition.

Martin and Steve
IGSA Co-Presidents 2023-2024





UPDATES FROM IMMSA

Hello Immunologists!

We hope you are all enjoying your summer so far, whether you are doing classes, doing research, or taking some time to relax.

We are Victoria Sephton and Allison Chan, and we are your IMMSA Co-Presidents for the 2024-25 school year! We are so excited to take on this role and can't thank Catherine and Josh enough for their hard work this year – we have big shoes to fill.

Next year, we're bringing back the events and resources you already know and love – such as networking events with students and faculty, research talks and seminars, career development workshops, and OQUIC – and we can't wait to introduce new ones, like a full Lab Bootcamp workshop series to give IMM undergrads a chance to hone their Immunology-focused lab skills. Keep an eye out for social events as well: we hope not only to bring together IMM Specialists, Majors, and Minors, but to connect Immunology students with their peers from other departments too!

As Co-Presidents, we work for you. We welcome feedback and ideas from everyone in the Immunology department, and we encourage you to reach out!

Take care,

Victoria Sephton and Allison Chan
Immunology Students' Association (IMMSA) Co-Presidents
2024/25



PUBLICATIONS

(to May 2024, as indexed by webofscience.com on May 29, 2024)

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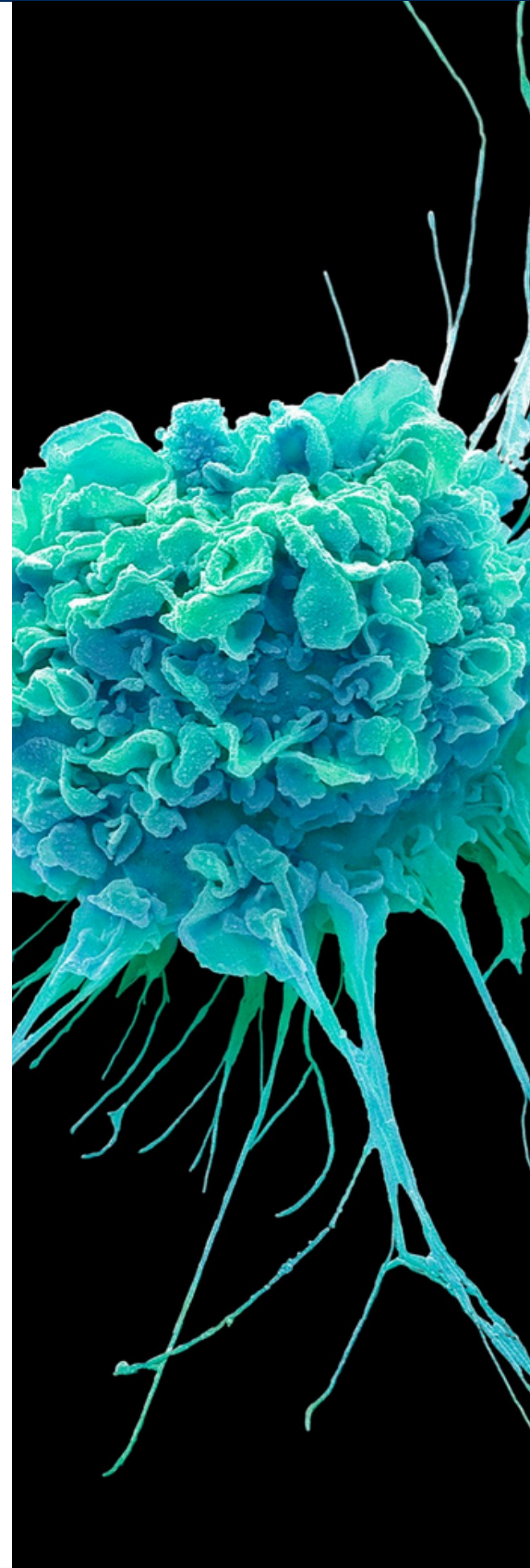
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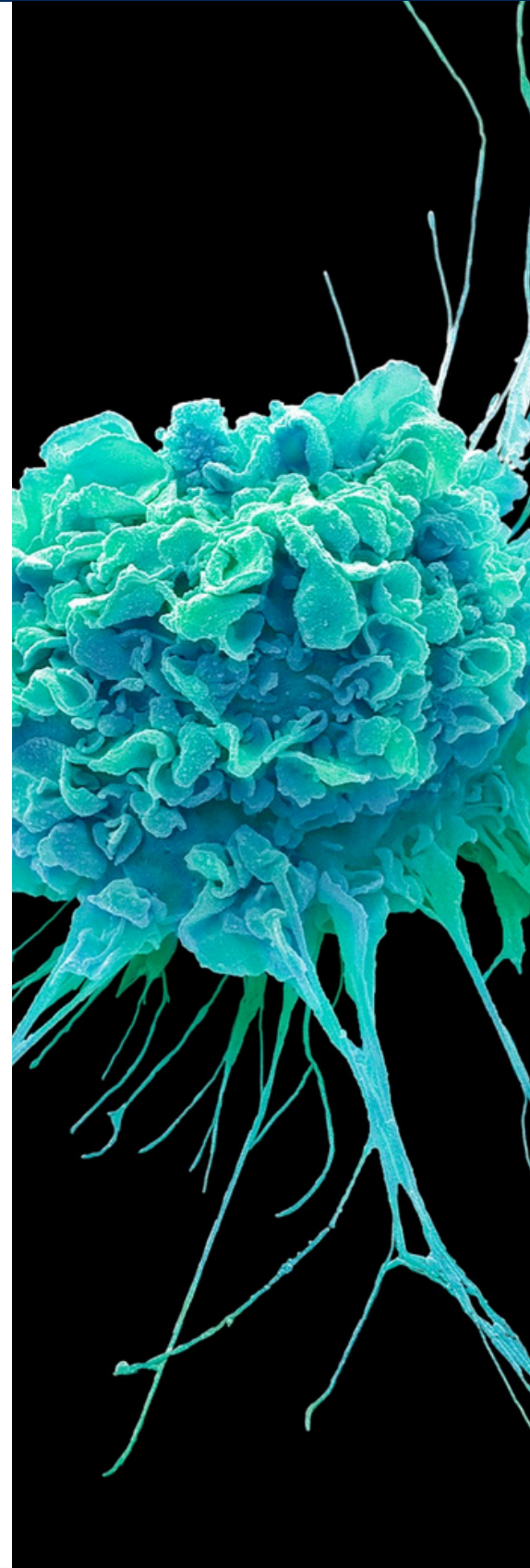
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