

The Novartis Oncology Young Canadian Investigator Awards (NOYCIA) returns for its 22nd year at ASCO 2025

Jun 10, 2025

- *For over two decades, NOYCIA has fueled emerging research in Canada, driving scientific knowledge in cancer*

Montreal, QC – June 10, 2025 – Novartis Canada is pleased to announce the winners of the 2025 Novartis Oncology Young Canadian Investigator Awards (NOYCIA), an annual national competition dedicated to advancing oncology through the promotion of research by supporting Canadian oncology researchers. This year marks the 22nd year of the awards, which took place on Sunday, June 1st at the 2025 American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Annual Meeting.

NOYCIA celebrates the innovative work by selecting ten oncology researchers from Canada who have had their abstracts accepted at ASCO and demonstrate excellence in their area of study.

“At Novartis, we are deeply committed to advancing scientific knowledge through innovation and collaboration,” said Sophia Kajla, Chief Scientific Officer and Vice-President, Scientific Affairs, Novartis Canada. “The NOYCIA Awards remain at the forefront of supporting innovative cancer research in Canada, reflecting Novartis Canada’s ongoing commitment to advancing science and improving patient outcomes. We are proud to continue celebrating and investing in early-career oncology leaders who are pushing the boundaries of discovery and clinical impact.”

Following deliberation by NOYCIA’s Scientific Panel, this year’s award recipients were selected for their pioneering research, spanning a range of disciplines, from immune checkpoint inhibitors and immunotherapy to healthcare systems and health human resource planning:

The 2025 NOYCIA recipients are:

Immune Checkpoint Inhibitors and Immunotherapy:

- **Luciana Siqueira, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre**
 - *Abstract:* The association between emotional distress prior to receiving immune checkpoint inhibitors and overall survival among patients with cancer: A population-based study
 - *Supervisors:* Dr. Lawson Eng & Dr. Marcus Butler
- **Edmond Rafie, Research Center of the Centre Hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal**
 - *Abstract:* Dietary compounds and patterns associated with immune checkpoint inhibitors (ICI) outcomes in advanced non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC)
 - *Supervisor:* Dr. Arielle Elkrief
- **Patrick Tuan Hoang, University of Toronto**
 - *Abstract:* Identification of immunotherapy early treatment failure in non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) using a novel cell-free DNA (cfDNA) tissue-agnostic genome-wide methylome enrichment

assay

- *Supervisor:* Dr. Adrian Sacher

- **Gregoire Marret, University Health Network**

- **Abstract:** Spatial transcriptomics analysis to predict response to immune checkpoint blockade (ICB) in recurrent or metastatic head and neck squamous cell cancer (RM-HNSCC)
- *Supervisor:* Dr. Lilian Siu

- **Rami Habib, McGill University**

- **Abstract:** JAK inhibitor for the treatment of steroid refractory and life threatening immune-related adverse events secondary to immune checkpoint inhibitors
- *Supervisor:* Dr. Khashayar Esfahani

Transcriptomics and Molecular Analysis:

- **Xin Wang, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre**

- **Abstract:** Correlative and spatial transcriptomic analysis of olaparib and durvalumab in patients with recurrent/refractory IDH-mutant gliomas
- *Supervisor:* Dr. Eric Chen

- **Ronan McLaughlin, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre**

- **Abstract:** NeoPancONE: GATA6 Expression as a Predictor of benefit to Peri-Operative Modified FOLFIRINOX in Resectable Pancreatic Adenocarcinoma (r-PDAC): A Multicentre Phase II study
- *Supervisor:* Dr. Jennifer Knox

Patient Experience and Decision-Making:

- **Rena Seeger, University of Ottawa**

- **Abstract:** Exploring decisional needs of patients considering first line treatment of Advanced EGFR+ lung cancer: An interpretive descriptive study
- *Supervisor:* Dr. Paul Wheatley-Price

Novel Therapeutic Approaches:

- **Asli Munzur, University of British Columbia**

- **Abstract:** Clonal hematopoiesis (CH) in participants with metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer (mCRPC) receiving 177Lu-PSMA-617 or cabazitaxel: an exploratory post-hoc analysis of a randomized phase II trial (TheraP ANZUP 1603)
 - *Supervisor:* Dr. Alex Wyatt

Healthcare Systems and Workforce Planning:

- **Philip Ding, University of Alberta**

- **Abstract:** Rethinking future workforce planning by developing novel metrics of complexity in cancer care
- *Supervisor:* Dr. Winson Cheung

“For over two decades, NOYCIA has been outstanding in encouraging and promoting Canadian-based cancer research, moving scientific knowledge and understanding in oncology forward through the endorsement of

research,” said Dr. Paul Wheatley-Price, NOYCIA Chair and medical oncologist, The Ottawa Hospital. “The calibre of research occurring in Canada is truly world-class, and the NOYCIA Awards provides the platform to recognize the tremendous contributions of our emerging leaders. It’s incredibly rewarding to be part of this initiative and a privilege to continue to serve as the Chair of the Scientific Panel.”

In addition to recognizing the achievement and potential of scientific investigation, Dr. David Addiss, 2025 NOYCIA guest speaker and Director, Focus Area for Compassion and Ethics (FACE), Task Force for Global Health, encouraged the award recipients and other attendees to cultivate compassion, which is fundamental to the unique relationship between patients and their healthcare providers.

"As clinicians and oncology researchers, you are motivated and sustained by compassion—the desire to alleviate and prevent suffering—which arises from a sense of shared humanity," said Dr. Addiss. "And although science shows that compassionate health care provides significant benefits for patients, providers and health systems, we face growing challenges of resource scarcity, time pressures, and other systemic constraints, which may limit our ability to fully realize this ideal in practice. Despite these challenges, connecting with and nurturing our compassionate impulse on a daily basis allows us to accompany and support our patients in a way that enhances both patient satisfaction and professional fulfillment."

Mentorship Matters Program

NOYCIA 2025 includes the **Mentorship Matters Program** which offers mentorship opportunities to trainees who attend the NOYCIA awards dinner.

The program provides trainees with the opportunity to network with leaders in Canadian cancer centres. Canadian oncologists co-host a table during the NOYCIA awards allowing trainees from across Canada to have the opportunity to hear from mentors about career paths, programs and opportunities that their centres provide and to ask questions.

About the Novartis Oncology Young Investigators Award (NOYCIA)

With a mission to support Canadian oncology researchers, NOYCIA provides funding, support, and recognition to 10 researchers that demonstrate excellence in their specialist field of study. Eligible applicants include Post-Doctoral Students, Residents, Fellows, Graduate Students, Medical Students, PhD Candidates and Undergraduates who are affiliated with a Canadian institution and are the first author of an abstract accepted for the annual ASCO meeting. For more information about NOYCIA, go to: www.noycia.ca.

About Novartis

Novartis is a focused innovative medicines company. Every day, we work to reimagine medicine to improve and extend people’s lives so that patients, healthcare professionals and societies are empowered in the face of serious disease. Our medicines reach more than 250 million people worldwide.

In Canada, Novartis Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc. employs approximately 600 people to serve the evolving needs of patients and the healthcare system and invests over \$30 million in R&D yearly in the country. For more information visit www.novartis.ca.

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