



UKRAINE PAEDIATRIC FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

2021 PROGRESS REPORT



DR. OLHA TYCHKIVSKA



DR. OLHA TYCHKIVSKA

IMPROVING HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR
UKRAINIAN CHILDREN

DR. OLHA TYCHKIVSKA—the brilliant Ukraine Paediatric Fellowship Program (UPFP) Fellow who was invited by SickKids to extend her neurology fellowship by an extra year—has completed her time at SickKids and returned home to Ukraine in June. Dr. Tychkivska hopes to share her knowledge and experience with her colleagues in Ukraine so they can improve the care and quality of life for children with epilepsy.

Dr. Tychkivska's outstanding contributions were recognized when she was presented with an award for excellence in clinical teaching in the Department of Neurology at the end of her Fellowship. Her fellow clinicians as well as her supervisors were incredibly impressed by her and voted for her to receive this much-deserved award. Additionally, Dr. Tychkivska passed the evaluation to become a diplomate of the Canadian Society of Clinical Neurophysiology. She is the only expert in Ukraine with this highly specialized qualification. Dr. Tychkivska is currently setting up a neurophysiology diagnostic laboratory for the assessment of seizure disorders in Lviv at the City Children's Hospital—the first of its kind in western Ukraine. Following her training in Toronto, Dr. Tychkivska is uniquely qualified to evaluate complex manifestations of seizure disorders and recommend appropriate treatments for children from across Ukraine. Dr. Tychkivska's new unit will include a video monitoring system that SickKids sent to Lviv in 2019, which, thanks to her training, can now be fully utilized.

Dr. Tychkivska is extremely grateful to have participated in this Fellowship Program. She feels it was a truly unique and invaluable opportunity. We look forward to hearing about her accomplishments over the next few years.

Subspecialty Trainee Award for Excellence in
Clinical Teaching





EQUIPMENT DONATIONS

We are excited to announce that as part of our equipment donation strategy, a neurosurgical ultrasound was delivered to the Odesa Regional Children's Hospital in June. In addition to this machine, UPFP also sent an operating microscope in 2019. With the new equipment in hand, former Fellow Dr. Ihor Yushchak, the chief of the neurosurgical department, was able to convince his superiors to invest in renovating their outdated operating room, allowing the neurosurgeons to provide better and safer care for their patients. Our equipment donations continue—we are currently arranging the delivery of a neuronavigation system and neurosurgical ultrasound to the Ukraine National Specialized Children's Hospital (Okhmatdyt) in Kyiv.

FOLIC ACID FORTIFICATION AND SPINA BIFIDA

TWO YEARS AGO, we wrote about our advocacy work in Ukraine to convince the government to bring in mandatory fortification of flour with folic acid. This is necessary to prevent children from being born with Spina Bifida, a disabling congenital abnormality. Ukraine has the highest rate in Europe of these abnormalities, which are either lethal or permanently disabling.

Fortification is inexpensive and numerous countries fortify their grains, including Canada and the United States. Ukraine fortifies grain for export, but not for domestic consumption. In 2019 a law in favour of fortification for domestic consumption was finally written and had its first reading in Ukraine's Parliament. However, with the formation of a new government, the law was never adopted and was eventually abandoned. In the meantime, children in Ukraine continue to suffer.

In collaboration with the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC), the Canadian Ambassador to Ukraine, and Dr. Tychkivska and her colleagues, we have renewed the advocacy campaign for folate fortification of flour in Ukraine and have been encouraging the Cabinet of Ministers, the Ministry of Health, the Parliamentary Committee for Health as well as members of Parliament to push through the necessary legislation. We are hoping the First Lady, **Mrs. Olena Zelenska**, will once again lend her support to this initiative as she did in 2019 after visiting SickKids and learning more about the issue.

If you are interested in learning more about this effort, you can contact the national office of UCC to offer your support.

CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. ERIC BOUFFET

DR. ERIC BOUFFET, a key player on our UPPF team and Director of the SickKids Brain Tumour Program, is the 2021 recipient of the Society for NeuroOncology Lifetime Achievement Award. This award is given to an individual who has made significant contributions to neuro-oncology in clinical care and translational research. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Bouffet visited the Ukraine National Specialized Children's Hospital in Kyiv and the Western Ukraine Specialized Children's Hospital in Lviv on advisory trips. He quickly realized there was a problem—children with brain tumours at these hospitals were being misdiagnosed. Dr. Bouffet came up with the idea of multidisciplinary virtual rounds—allowing SickKids to advise Ukrainian doctors on the diagnosis and treatment of difficult neuro-oncology cases. Dr. Bouffet has spent over three decades dedicated to the research and care of children with brain tumours around the world.

WHAT'S NEXT

Travel was a large part of the UPPF program, and we are hopeful that in 2022, some sense of normalcy will return and international exchanges will resume. We look forward to organizing advisory trips with our growing number of volunteer clinicians at SickKids and to having observers from Ukraine come to SickKids again. Despite the many challenges, the program continues to make a significant impact on the professional development of young doctors and on the improvement of health outcomes for Ukrainian children. There are many accomplishments Ukrainian participants of our program have achieved in advancing paediatric medical care and we look forward to informing you of these in future updates.

VIRTUAL CONNECTIONS ARE HERE TO STAY

Improving care for Ukrainian children from Toronto

DUE TO THE ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, UPPF teams have still not been able to visit Ukraine for advisory trips. However, through online consultations, virtual rounds, and webinar presentations, SickKids clinicians have continued advising and educating Ukrainian doctors. Our incredible team of doctors has a wealth of knowledge in diverse areas and has delivered presentations on many aspects of brain disorders in children.

Drs. James Rutka and Eric Bouffet have been concentrating on neurooncology, **Dr. Tina Go** on epilepsy, and **Dr. Myroslava Romach** on perinatal maternal mental health and its impact on infant neurodevelopment.

**SCHOOL OF EPILEPSY
DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT
STRUCTURAL FORMS OF EPILEPSY**

10TH SEPTEMBER 2021

LECTURERS

<p>Yuriy Chomoljak MD, PhD, Associate Professor of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Epilepsy, University of Toronto, Canada Medical Director, Central and Eastern European Medical Center, Ukraine</p>	<p>Lyudmyla Tantsura MD, PhD, Head of the Department of Child Neurology and Epileptology and a member of the Board of the Institute of Neurology and Neurobiology of the AMU of Ukraine Kyiv, Ukraine</p>	<p>Lydia Marienko MD, PhD, Professor of Neurology, Department of Neurology, Kyiv National Medical University, Ukraine Head of the Kyiv Regional Diagnostic Center Kyiv, Ukraine</p>	<p>Volodymyr Kharitonov MD, PhD, in all paediatric neurology and epileptology Kyiv, Ukraine</p>	
<p>Cristina Go MD, PhD, Associate Professor of Neurology, University of Toronto, Canada Epilepsy, Department of Neurology, University of Toronto Toronto, Canada</p>	<p>Vladyslava Ahly MD, PhD, Associate Professor of the Department of Child Neurology and Epileptology Kyiv, Ukraine</p>	<p>Myroslava Romach MD, PhD, Associate Professor and Director of the Department of Perinatal Mental Health, University of Toronto Mississauga, Ontario</p>	<p>Dima Glymichenko MD, PhD, Head of the Department of Neurology, Kyiv National Medical University, Ukraine Kyiv, Ukraine</p>	<p>Olya Tyshchivska MD, PhD, Associate Professor of Neurology, Department of Child Neurology, Kyiv National Medical University, Ukraine Kyiv, Ukraine</p>

Symposia on the diagnosis and management of seizure disorders; the prevalence, prevention and treatment of Spina Bifida; and managing psychological distress during pregnancy and the postpartum period to optimize birth outcomes all took place online with key speakers from Canada, Ukraine, and the United States.

Even from their offices here in Toronto, our team has been able to directly influence the practice of care for Ukrainian children through these virtual interactions and Dr. James Rutka believes these virtual connections will continue for the foreseeable future.

THANK YOU.

Every day, SickKids works toward improving the lives of children, and our success depends on the generosity of remarkable donors like you. Your commitment to the Ukraine Paediatric Fellowship Program ensures that we can continue to offer the best possible outcomes for children in Ukraine, so they can live longer, healthier lives. Thank you for your continued generosity.



For more information, please contact:

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