

About the Canadian Chapter



The Canadian Chapter of ACRP was founded in 1997 by a group of Canadian clinical research professionals looking for educational and networking opportunities with a distinctly Canadian flavour.

Since its inception, the chapter has grown to over 186 members across the country. We offer regional annual educational conferences/workshops and networking opportunities across the country and hold our Annual General meeting each year in conjunction with the ACRP Global Conference.

Consider membership in the Canadian Chapter to be involved in a great organization and take advantage of distinctly Canadian offerings and opportunities.

Biographies

Mahdis Dorkalam, MSc, RHN – Co-President

Mahdis Dorkalam has been working in the pharmaceutical arena for over 20 years. She started her career as a clinical research associate and hasn't looked back since. She has worked for several of the large and medium sized pharmaceutical companies as well as CROs, managing and overseeing development of several life changing products across a wide range of therapeutic areas. Her passion remains ensuring safe, efficacious and cost effective pharmaceutical products that reach Canadian patients.

Currently she is the President of CRM Pharma Consulting a boutique firm providing consulting services in the fields of clinical research and regulatory affairs, with a focus on the requirements of Health Canada and the Canadian market.

Mahdis holds a MSc degree in Pharmaceutical Sciences and is a Registered Holistic Nutritionist. Over the years she has been a member of numerous clinical research associations and now hopes to give back by being more actively involved in the Canadian chapter of ACRP.

Shelly Sedighi, BSc, CCPM – Co-President

Shelly Sedighi is a healthcare consultant focused on clinical research and education and healthcare management. She works with interdisciplinary teams and continues to conduct local and international studies and initiatives in clinical research and healthcare management. Shelly joined the ACRP Canada Chapter executive committee in 2017 and was immediately involved in Toronto ACRP conference planning and marketing.

Shelly obtained her BSc degree in Biology and Science & Technology from York University and obtained a year-long Postgraduate Certificate in Clinical Research from Seneca College. She also completed the Clinical Research Design training course at the Boston University School of Medicine. She also pursued studies in Project Management at the University of Toronto and obtained Certificates through SoCRA, ACRP and CRS. She has also been an active member of the Dale Carnegie Business Group and achieved certificates in Organizational Leadership and provided services as assistant to the members and trainers of the Dale Carnegie classes.

Shelly has been rooted in a creative learning and educational environment and continues to advance her education in the clinical research and healthcare fields.

Angela Besanger BSc, CCRC, CCRA – Immediate Past-President

Angela is a Certified Clinical Research Coordinator and Certified Clinical Research Associate and with over 15 years of experience in both the health-care and pharmaceutical industries. Currently, as a Project Manager at Turnstone Biologics, Angela is responsible for the overall management and execution of operational activities involved in the planning, implementation, conduct and completion of clinical trials. Previously, Angela has held roles such as clinical research coordinator, research site manager, project/program manager, and clinical research manager within the healthcare, pharmaceutical and biotech sectors. Angela has been ACRP certified since 2006 and is the immediate past-president of the ACRP Canadian Chapter.

Lydia Frost, MSc, CCRC – Secretary

Lydia Frost is a Certified Clinical Research Coordinator and Regional Site Lead at LMC | Manna Research, working in phase II to IV trials across multiple therapeutic areas. She obtained her BSc in Human Kinetics at the University of Guelph as a recipient of the President's Scholarship, and continued with a MSc in Human Health and Nutritional Sciences from the University of Guelph with NSERC scholarship funding. Lydia started working at LMC Diabetes & Endocrinology at a Clinical Research Coordinator in 2014, and since has progressed to working with LMC | Manna Research as a Regional Site Lead of research across four sites. She has been a member of ACRP since 2014, and obtained the distinction of being a CCRC in 2016. Most recently, she was awarded the Pharma Times

North America Clinical Researcher of the Year award in the Clinical Research Coordinator division in 2017.

Mehdi Al-Khalissi (BSc.) – Treasurer

Mehdi is currently a Clinical Research Associate II at PRA Health Sciences working within the Sanofi Dedicated CSU Team.

He has over 3 years of experience as a Clinical Research Associate previously working with a Toronto based Clinical Research and Regulatory firm as well as DOCS Global working within the Amgen FSP Team. Areas of interest include conducting activities such as clinical monitoring, efficient process development, and business development among others. Mehdi holds a Clinical Research Associate Certification from Humber College as well as a Bachelor of Science in Biopharmaceutical Science with a specialization in Medicinal Chemistry from the University of Ottawa.

David Brown, B.Sc., CCRP – Chair, Education Committee

Dave has held a variety of roles centered on clinical study management over the past 15 years. After an earlier R&D career in industrial and academic immunopathology, Dave undertook clinical lab management at Hamilton Regional (Juravinski) Cancer Centre which segued into global study management roles for phases I-IV at MDS Pharma Services, Johnson & Johnson Medical Companies, and AstraZeneca. Covering therapeutic areas in oncology, diabetes, orthopaedics, and neurology, Dave has managed pharma and medical device studies for GCP compliance in areas of data management, informed consent, site management, REB collaborations, contract development, and study logistics. Dave most recently was Business/Project Manager in GMP-compliant drug manufacture at Patheon.

Dave earned his BSc Hons in Biological Science, minor Biochemistry, from the University of Guelph.

Diane Fortin, M.Sc., CCRA, CCRP – Member at Large

Diane has over 15 years of experience in both medical device and drug industries. She is currently working as a Senior Principal Field Clinical Site Specialist at Medtronic where she is responsible for the overall management of Eastern and Central Canadian sites. Before that she was a Clinical Research Associate at Boehringer-Ingelheim, Amgen and Berlex. She has a broad experience in many therapeutic areas including Cardiology, Neurology, Oncology, Pulmonary and Microbiology. She holds a Master's degree in Clinical Research from the University of Montreal and a Specialized Graduate Diploma in Management from L'École des Hautes Études Commerciales (HEC) de Montréal. Diane has been certified with ACRP since 2009.

Dory Sample, MSN/MPH – Member at Large

Dory is the Clinical Research Program Manager for the Women & Children's Health Research Institute (WCHRI), at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. This challenging role was established to better facilitate a more integrated and comprehensive approach for supporting research excellence. Dory has over 25 years of experience in the clinical research world, both in industry and academia, and has held positions such as research nurse, CRA, medical writer, project manager, and team lead prior to her current role. Dory strongly believes in the value of continuing education, and is happy to be a part of the Canadian Chapter of ACRP.

Jovana Mijuskovics-Stepanovic, R.Ph, CCRA – Member at Large

Jovana has more than 13 years of experience in Pharmaceutical Industry and has held different positions from Clinical Research Associate, through Lead Clinical Research Associate to Project Manager and most recently Senior Project Director. Jovana has successfully managed numerous clinical trials (Phase I through to Phase IV, postmarketing and registry studies) with a variety of therapeutic areas to include medical device studies across the globe (North America, Latin America, Australia, Russia, West and East Europe, South Africa, Middle East and North Africa). Jovana has successfully collaborated with a variety of local and global vendors to include Clinical Research Organizations, Central Laboratories, Drug Manufacturing and Distribution, Central imaging and ECG. Recently Jovana has been involved as a Coach for the junior Project Managers. Jovana has been certified with ACRP since 2007, was a Member of Serbian ACRP Chapter since 2006 and ACRP Canada Chapter since 2014 and member of Canada ACRP Executive Committee since 2015.

Simona Meier, BSc, BA(Hon), CCRP, ACRP-CP – Member at Large

Simona has over 10 years experience in clinical research in the academic setting. She has worked as a Clinical Research Professional at the University of Saskatchewan since 2007. Her position involves helping investigators to set up, maintain and complete clinical research studies (both contracted and Investigator-Initiated), providing clinical research expertise to research sites, REBs, policy-makers, and acting as a liaison among investigators, study staff, sponsors and other research, regulatory, and health agencies, in all administrative aspects of study management. She has recently been working on a project in which she has taken on the study monitor role (CRA).

Simona has been ACRP certified since 2017 and SoCRA certified since 2009. Simona received her B.Sc. in Biology from the University of Regina in 2005 and her B.A. (Hon) in Psychology from the University of Regina in 2006.

Simona has volunteered with ACRP since 2017, when she participated as a Subject Matter Expert (SME) in the development of the ACRP Certified Professional (ACRP-CP) exam. She has participated as an Item Writer for ACRP since 2018 and has been a member of the ACRP Canada Chapter Executive since 2018.