
Pediatric Rheumatology at Montreal's Sainte-Justine Hospital: The New Kids on the Block

By Marie-Paule Morin, MD, FRCPC, PhD(c); and Julie Barsalou, MD, FRCPC, MSc

For the past three years, you could say that a fresh breeze has been blowing in the Pediatric Rheumatology Department of Montreal's Sainte-Justine Hospital. Our department now consists of two young (we still like to call ourselves that!) pediatric rheumatologists. We both completed specialized training at the Montreal Children's Hospital and additional training at the Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) in Toronto.

More specifically, Dr. Julie Barsalou completed a three-year fellowship in pediatric lupus and neonatal lupus, as well as a Master's in Biomedical Sciences. The focus of her research is neonatal lupus, and she is actively working to establish a follow-up clinic for children exposed to maternal anti-Ro and anti-La antibodies. For her part, Dr. Marie-Paule Morin's research interests lie in the medical education field, and she is completing a PhD in Health Sciences Education. The theme of her research is health-care partnership, more specifically, the active involvement of adolescent patients (especially those suffering from juvenile arthritis) in teaching programs.

One of the strengths of our department is that it is combined with the Pediatric Immunology Department, giving us an in-depth perspective on the pathophysiology of autoimmune diseases. The interaction with our colleagues during weekly meetings is extremely fruitful! These colleagues are in charge of Sainte-Justine Hospital's exploratory immunology laboratory, a national reference laboratory in this field. So we have an opportunity to evaluate in greater depth the condition of our patients suffering from various complex autoimmune diseases.



The New Kids on the Block: Dr. Marie-Paule Morin on the left and Dr. Julie Barsalou on the right.

Regarding future projects, we are actively working with our colleagues to set up joint clinics: lupus nephritis clinics with the nephrology team and auto-inflammatory diseases and recurring fever clinics with the infectious diseases department. These clinics will soon be up and running, offering excellent opportunities for collaboration and learning.

A recurring theme for young physicians starting out in their career is how to balance work and

family. We can boast that we have been very "productive" on this account. Our first weeks of shiftwork, setting up clinics and pursuing our respective studies were interspersed with baby bottles, changing diapers and short periods of sleep. This appears to be a required rite of passage... In the next few years, we hope to get a little more sleep so that we have the energy to meet the challenges and take full advantage of the opportunities that come our way!

Marie-Paule Morin, MD, FRCPC, PhD(c)
Clinical Assistant Professor, Division of Rheumatology and Immunology, CHU Sainte-Justine
Department of Pediatrics, University of Montreal,
Montreal, Quebec

Julie Barsalou, MD, FRCPC, MSc
Clinical Assistant Professor, Division of Rheumatology and Immunology, CHU Sainte-Justine
Department of Pediatrics, University of Montreal,
Montreal, Quebec