

2020 Activity Report

The Quebec – Clinical Research
Organization in Cancer

Looking Back on a Very Unusual Year

“

This year 2020, long to be remembered as the year of the COVID-19 pandemic, has highlighted the importance of science and clinical research in human health. In this unprecedented context, Q-CROC was able to deploy a multitude of actions and to make commitments in support of its network members and cancer patients.



Jean-Frédéric Lafontaine
Chair

The financial support secured and the collaborations established in 2020 have confirmed that our partners trust QCROC to carry out relevant activities, in particular activities that bring our members into better unity. Finally, we would like to highlight the remarkable work done by the professionals of our network and their colleagues in this exceptionally difficult context.



Lucie D'Amours
General Manager

”

Who We Are

Quebec's largest clinical research network in oncology

Q-CROC develops solutions to optimize the recruitment of participants in clinical trials and to support regulatory compliance.

Our Team

We have a unique structure: 5 managers based in Quebec City and 18 Q-CROC hospital-based liaison coordinators who support hospital research teams. In addition to providing direct access to investigators and oncology research teams, the liaison coordinators share information to optimize the efficiency and compliance of clinical research within their institution and across the institutions of the Q-CROC network. Moreover, their presence in the field allows us to set up clinical research awareness activities that have a provincial impact.



Not-for-profit
organization founded
by physicians in 2008

Provincial and Pan-Canadian Scope

Q-CROC plays an active role in the participant recruitment and clinical trial awareness components of the Quebec Consortium Against Cancer. On the Canadian scene, Q-CROC is the Eastern provinces representative for the pan-Canadian 3CTN (Canadian Cancer Clinical Trials Network) initiative in academic clinical research. Q-CROC also serves on the pan-Canadian Clinical Trials Education and Awareness Committee of N2 (Network of Networks).

Cancer and Clinical Trials in Quebec

55,000

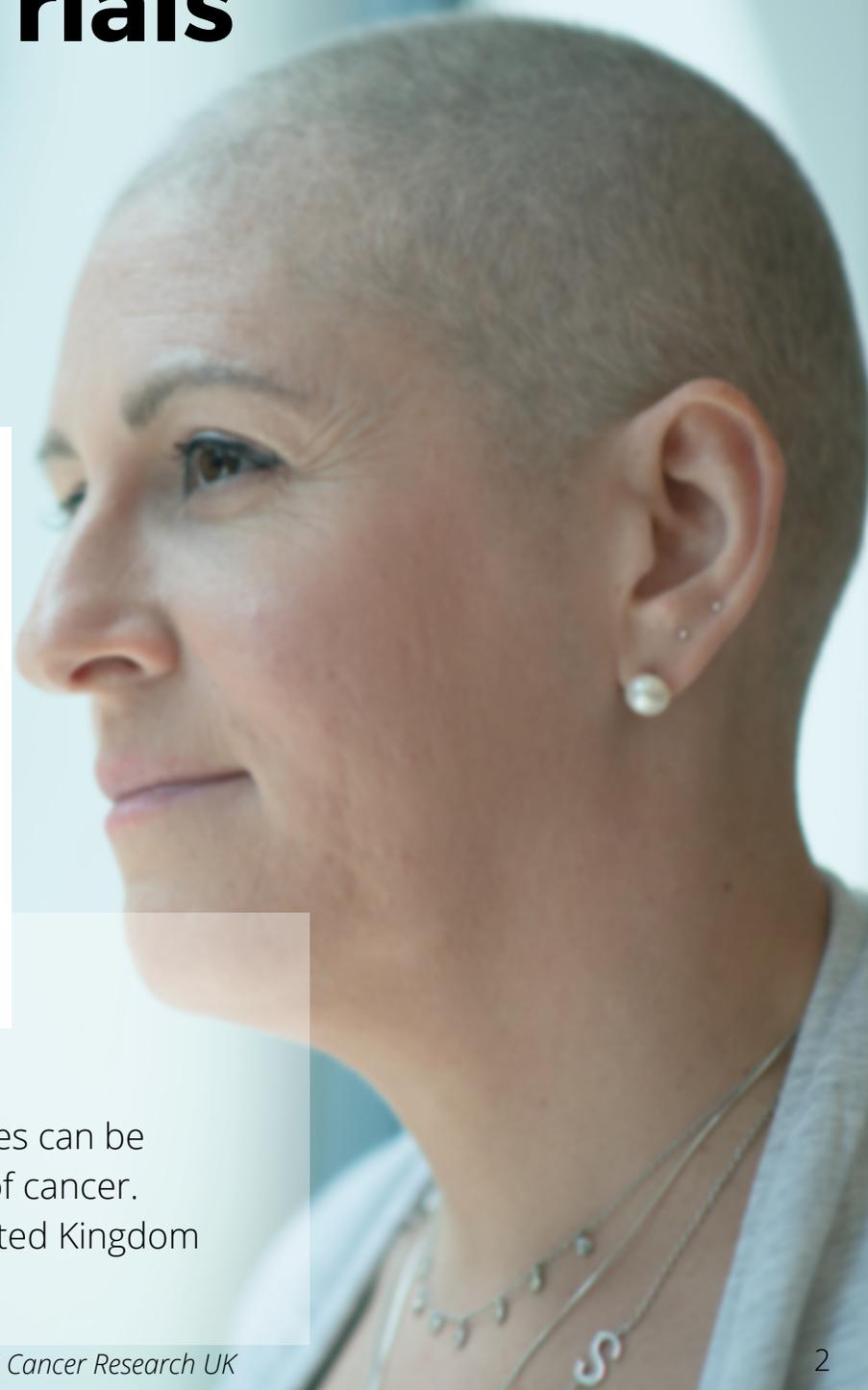
**new cancer cases
diagnosed in Quebec
in 2020**



**Quebecers'
participation in
oncology clinical trials
in 2020**

Why is participating in clinical trials important?

The more patients participate in clinical trials, the faster new therapies can be tested, approved and made available to people with the same type of cancer. While the Canadian average is 4.7%, some countries such as the United Kingdom have a participation rate of 20%.



The Network at a Glance

Greater Montreal

CHU Sainte-Justine

CHUM - Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal

CISSS de la Montérégie-Centre *

CISSS de Laval

CIUSSS de l'Est-de-l'Île-de-Montréal

CIUSSS du Centre-Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal

CIUSSS de l'Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal *

CIUSSS du Nord-de-l'Île-de-Montréal

CUSM - Centre universitaire de santé McGill

**New member in 2020*

Québec

CHU de Québec - Université Laval

IUCPQ - Institut universitaire de cardiologie et de pneumologie de Québec

Chicoutimi

CIUSSS du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean

Gatineau

CISSS de l'Outaouais

Rimouski

CISSS du Bas-Saint-Laurent

Sherbrooke

CIUSSS de l'Estrie

Trois-Rivières

CIUSSS de la Mauricie-et-du-Centre-du-Québec



The Q-CROC Network

by the numbers



+ 2,400
participants
in oncology
clinical trials
in 2020

98 %

of all ongoing oncology
clinical trials in Quebec



16

275
investigators



+ 700

recruiting trials in 2020

120

trials opened
in 2020

83 %

vs

17 %

pharmaceutical
trials

academic
trials



Geographical distribution of new trials in 2020

67 %

Montreal

18 %

Quebec

15 %

Other regions

**Due to COVID-19, a decrease in the number of new trials started has been observed for the year 2020*

***Sum of trials conducted in each center of the Q-CROC network*

Managing Communities of Practice a sharing and collaborative model

Since 2018, Q-CROC has enabled the implementation of 4 communities of practice in clinical research. These communities stimulate collaboration among investigators specialized by tumor site, allow the opening of targeted therapy trials and optimize the referral of participants between centers. Q-CROC coordinates the communities of practice and optimizes the sharing of information among members.

Our 4 communities of practice bring together over 100 members in 16 healthcare institutions across the province:



Thoracic
(RÉSOT)



Pediatrics



Colorectal



Hematology

What is a Community of Practice?



A community of practice is a group of people who work together and interact to learn from each other, sharing challenges, experiences and good practices in a particular area of their professional practice.

" The deployment of the hematology research community in Quebec has been a success thanks to the support of Q-CROC. Their assistance with the coordination and implementation of all the necessary processes for the achievement of this project is very much appreciated! "

- Dr. Sarit Assouline, hemato-oncologist at the Jewish General Hospital and member of the hemato-oncology community of practice



ONCOQUÉBEC

An efficient tool that simplifies the search for clinical trials

Launched by Q-CROC in October 2019, OncoQuebec is the most up-to-date and comprehensive web-based clinical trial search application in Quebec. It has over 700 studies recruiting, representing more than 98% of oncology clinical trials in the province. Developed with and for healthcare professionals, over 5,000 people have used it since its launch. A new phase of development in 2021 will address the needs of patients and caregivers.

OncoQuébec won honors in the "Stars of the Health Network" contest organized by the Caisse Desjardins du Réseau de la Santé. OncoQuébec stood out in the category "Simple: streamlines tasks or processes and improves the way things are done in healthcare institutions".



5,000
users



+ 50,000
visits in 2020





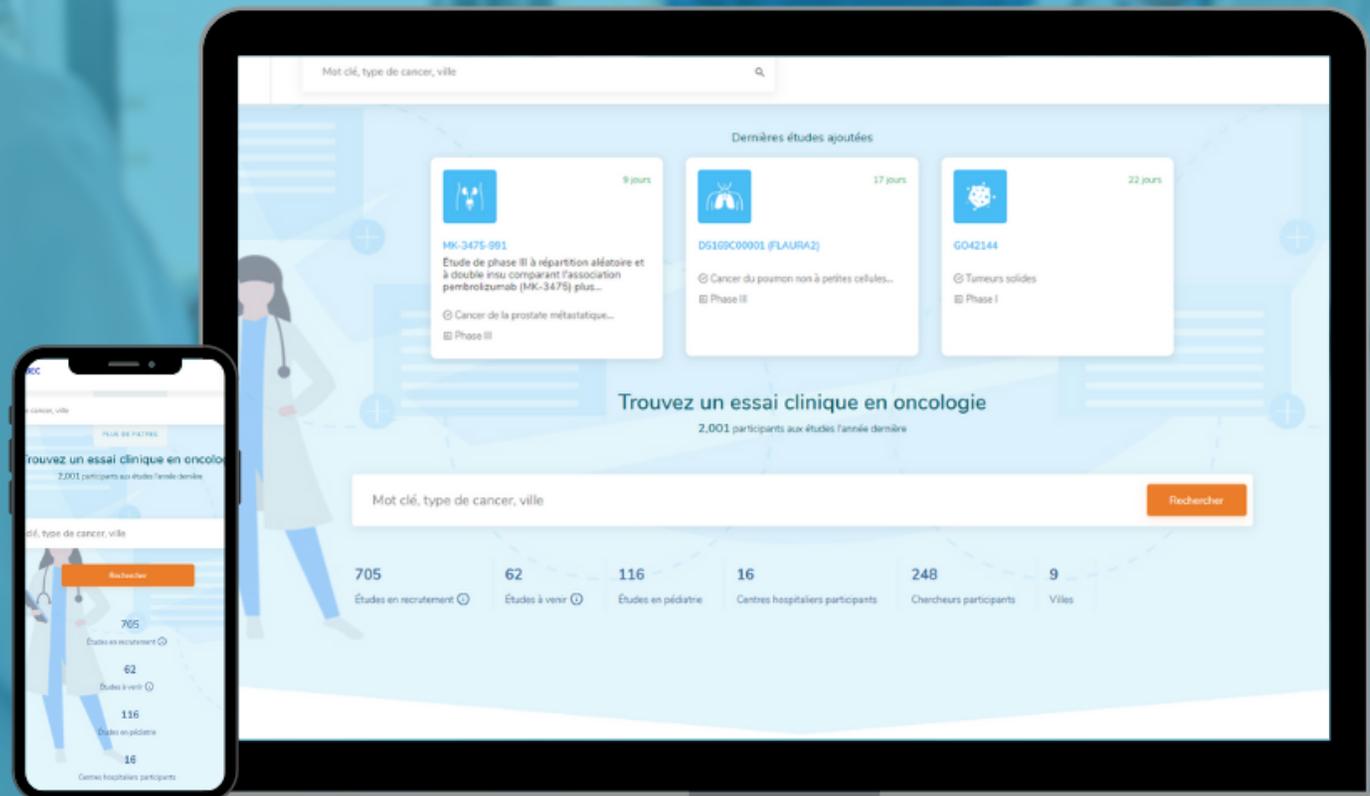
ONCOQUÉBEC

What users say

"Very impressive.
Great initiative."

"It's a fantastic tool..."

"This is a real
improvement"



Encouraging Professional Development of Research Teams

Through grants, webinars and other training activities, Q-CROC supports research teams in their professional development.

Training in French suited to the Quebec context

Over 550 network members participated in one of the four webinars for clinical research professionals organized by Q-CROC in 2020. In addition, over 150 professionals from the clinical research or oncology community working for external organizations (e.g. contract research organizations, pharmaceutical companies, etc.) also attended the webinars.

Why become an investigator?

For the first time in its history, Q-CROC hosted webinars for emerging physicians in October 2020. Drs. Richard LeBlanc (Maisonneuve-Rosemont Hospital) and Arielle Elkrief (CHUM) shared their backgrounds and the research projects they are working on with some 40 medical students.



*- "It's an extremely challenging and diverse career with endless possibilities. No two days are ever the same. Every day is an adventure."
Dr. Arielle Elkrief*

Since 2019, the majority of our webinars organized for clinical research professionals are accredited by the Collège des médecins du Québec.



+ \$40,000 in Grants for investigators

Investigator-initiated trials represent a significant challenge for research clinicians. In this type of trial, they assume the role of sponsor in addition to that of investigator. This dual role increases their responsibilities and adds significant complexity to their tasks. In order to support research clinicians and their teams, Q-CROC has been piloting grant programs since 2019. A total of 8 grants were awarded to network investigators and their teams in 2020.

Getting started on the right foot

A new grant program was launched in October 2020. The "[IIT start-up verification grants](#)" program allows investigators from the Q-CROC network to obtain the services of an expert consultant to assess the readiness of key aspects of their trial prior to start-up. The goal is to minimize risk and improve the quality and effectiveness of their trial.

Voluntary audit: a learning opportunity for investigators and their teams

Launched in 2019, the "[Voluntary investigator-initiated clinical trial regulatory compliance assessment program](#)" continues. To date, it has provided 5 investigators with an overall assessment of their trial. In each case, opportunities for improvement have been identified to ensure its success.

"Many thanks for your excellent work. I consider this report as a golden gift not only for our team but for the whole clinical research department. It's a whole world of opportunities for improvement!"



Promoting Clinical Research a priority for Q-CROC

Q-CROC dedicates part of its activities to raising public awareness on the importance of clinical research in improving cancer treatments. Q-CROC's accomplishments include the creation of educational materials distributed in hospitals and accessible on its website. QCROC also organizes webinars with patient associations.

New partnership with the Quebec Cancer Foundation

In October, Q-CROC entered a partnership with the Quebec Cancer Foundation to optimize support to people with cancer and their families, with particular emphasis on clinical trials. By making the most of the complementary strengths of the two organizations, this partnership will improve access to information on clinical research and, ultimately, access for Quebec patients to clinical trials in oncology. With the collaboration of Q-CROC, the Foundation added a page dedicated to clinical research on its website.

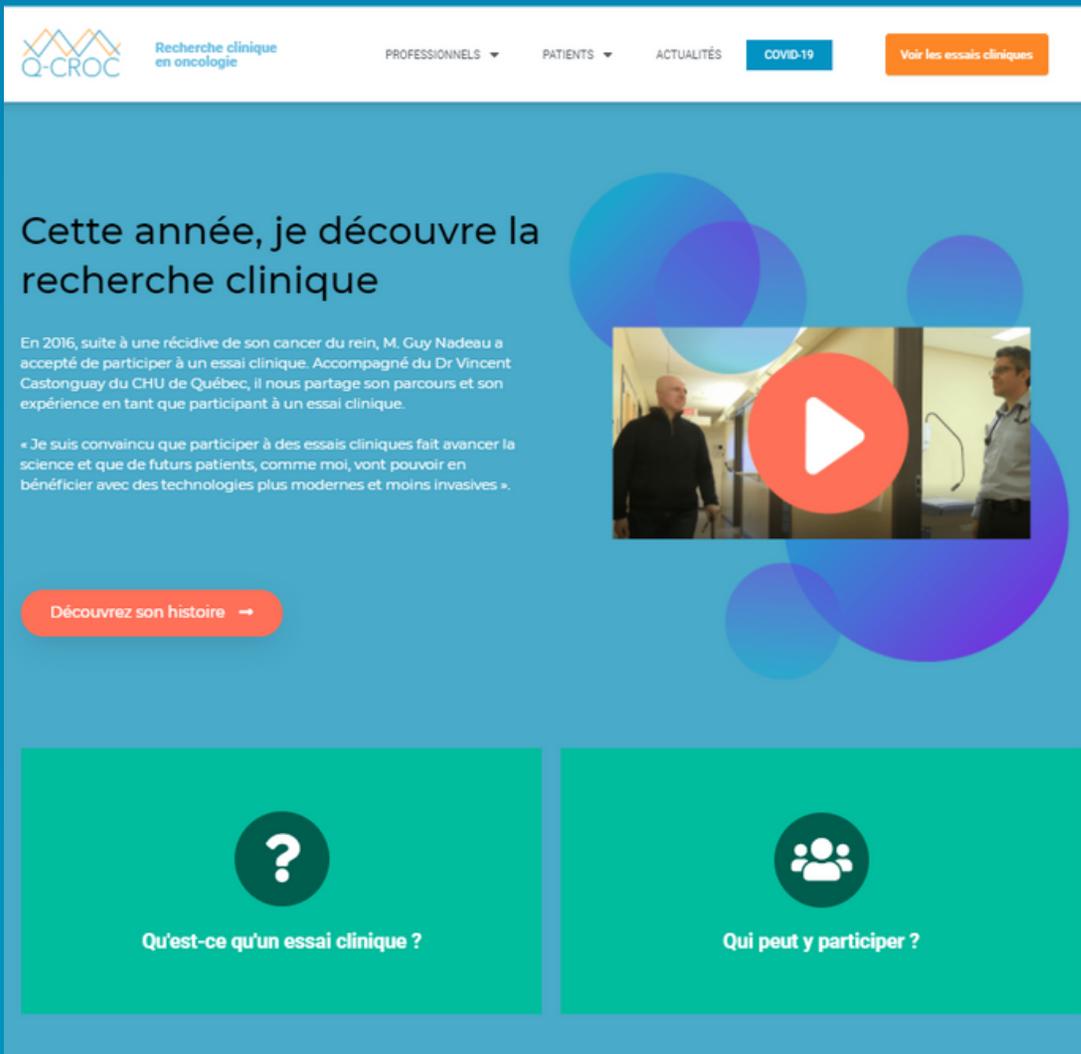


"Through this collaboration, we want to facilitate access of patients to clinical research projects, but we also want to make clinical trials more widely known so that patients can discuss them with healthcare teams. The partnership with Q-CROC demonstrates that together we will always be stronger against cancer."
- Marco Décelles, Executive Director of the Quebec Cancer Foundation

In February 2020, Q-CROC began a survey of cancer patients and their families to determine their needs for information about clinical research. Although 58% of respondents said they had little or no knowledge of clinical research, they indicated their willingness to hear about it during the diagnosis period or when discussing treatment options with their doctor.



In 2020, I Discover Clinical Research a successful 1st online campaign



The screenshot shows the Q-CROC website interface. At the top left is the Q-CROC logo and the text 'Recherche clinique en oncologie'. The navigation menu includes 'PROFESSIONNELS', 'PATIENTS', 'ACTUALITÉS', and 'COVID-19' (highlighted in blue). A button labeled 'Voir les essais cliniques' is in the top right. The main content area features a large blue background with the headline 'Cette année, je découvre la recherche clinique'. Below this is a video player with a red play button icon. A quote from a participant is displayed: '« Je suis convaincu que participer à des essais cliniques fait avancer la science et que de futurs patients, comme moi, vont pouvoir en bénéficier avec des technologies plus modernes et moins invasives ».' A red button with a white arrow says 'Découvrez son histoire →'. At the bottom, two green boxes contain icons and text: a question mark icon with 'Qu'est-ce qu'un essai clinique ?' and a group of people icon with 'Qui peut y participer ?'.

Every May 20th, on International Clinical Trials Day, Q-CROC organizes awareness activities in the hospitals throughout its network. This year, because of COVID-19, Q-CROC implemented a web-based awareness campaign called "[In 2020, I Discover Clinical Research.](#)" From May 20 to June 5, it was viewed over 30,000 times on social networks.



Two short videos were created in collaboration with the CHU de Québec - Université Laval to help people to better understand the experience of participants in a clinical trial and the work of research teams who take them in charge.

Many thanks to our financial partners:

- Amgen
- AbbVie
- AstraZeneca
- Bristol-Myers Squibb
- Gilead
- GlaxoSmithKline
- Janssen
- Merck
- Novocure
- Oncopole
- Pfizer
- Roche
- Sanofi
- Takeda

and collaborators:

- Biovalorem
- Canadian Cancer Clinical Trials Network (3CTN)
- Quebec Cancer Consortium
- École de santé publique de l'Université de Montréal (ESPUM)
- Fleexer
- Quebec Cancer Foundation
- Leucan
- Health Canada
- Canadian Cancer Society



To collaborate with Q-CROC:
info@qcroc.ca
418 781-0500
www.qcroc.ca | www.oncoquebec.com