**Mitacs Internship Opportunity for Fall Term 2021**

**Project Title:** Exploring Convalescent Plasma Therapy as a Potential Intervention in the Pandemic Response

**Schedule:** ~20 hours per week

**Salary:** $11,000 for 4 months

**Planned Start Date**:August 15, 2021

**Project Overview**

Convalescent plasma therapy is a transfusion treatment for treating and preventing infections, which has been studied during the COVID-19 pandemic in randomized clinical trials (RCT). Convalescent plasma is typically the only treatment available early in outbreaks of novel pathogens, until more advanced treatments and vaccines are developed. Deployment of convalescent plasma, involving the collection, processing and delivery of plasma to patients is logistically and operationally complex.

Our research project will document the British Columbia rollout of the CONCOR-1 trial, a pan-Canadian COVID-19 Convalescent Plasma RCT to study whether and how convalescent plasma therapy may be delivered most efficiently, effectively and equitably to patients during outbreaks of novel infectious agents in the future. Lessons from the CONCOR-1 trial will also inform better planning for other investigational drug trials in the context of an evolving pandemic.

Three Mitacs interns, researchers and research assistants will work as a team during the summer and fall terms of 2021 term to construct a system map of the continuum of convalescent plasma delivery by investigating the following key components of the continuum of convalescent plasma delivery:

1. *Canadian Blood Services (CBS)* – Collection, processing and distribution of plasma
2. *Health Care Settings* – Delivery of transfusion therapy in hospital and community settings
3. *Public Health* – Planning for faster trial rollout in future pandemics

Guided by an Advisory Committee with expertise in transfusion medicine, qualitative research and systems thinking, the interns will conduct literature and document reviews, stakeholder interviews and focus groups and thematic analysis of the qualitative data to inform the development of the system map. Interns will co-develop knowledge translation products to help disseminate findings to key stakeholders.

**Knowledge Translation** – We are recruiting one intern, who will synthesize the work of the research team on the continuum of COVID-19 convalescent plasma delivery and produce knowledge translation products to inform public health stakeholders of the findings to support the potential adoption of convalescent plasma as an early pandemic intervention measure in future pandemics. Additionally, the intern will develop knowledge translation products and strategies for other key stakeholders, such as the CONCOR-1 trial team, clinical trial administration experts, clinicians and health service delivery decision makers and the academic community.

**How to Apply** – Eligible candidates are students enrolled in a full-time graduate program or post-doctoral fellows. Required qualifications include past or ongoing education in public health or health sciences. Experience with qualitative research methods (interviews, focus groups, thematic analysis) and a strong interest in knowledge translation is preferred. Please contact **Dr. Maya Gislason** at maya\_gislason@sfu.ca for further details and application instructions.