# new faces

## FOUR NEW RESEARCHERS BRING FRESH IDEAS TO OUR EVOLVING TEAM

Our newest researchers bring a wealth of knowledge to the IWK in such diverse realms as the biology of metabolism, male infertility and genetic diseases, the epidemiology of cancer and obesity, and the treatment of children's neuromuscular and spinal disorders. Their work will advance our efforts to better diagnose, prevent and treat disease, and to improve the wellbeing of women, children and families.

### **YOUNES ANINI**, PHYSIOLOGY & BIOPHYSICS

**Dr. Younes Anini** is new to the IWK, but not to Dalhousie. Younes joined Dalhousie Medical School's Department of Physiology & Biophysics in 2005, launching a research program to explore the mechanisms that control weight and energy balance. He is continuing that work at the IWK, after accepting a joint appointment to the Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology in 2010. Younes is examining a recently discovered hormone called ghrelin, which regulates both appetite and blood-sugar balance, and collaborating with IWK clinicians to investigate the effect of obesity on women's and children's health. He holds funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Canada Foundation for Innovation and the Dalhousie Medical Research Foundation.

### **JASON HOWARD**, PEDIATRIC ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY

**Dr. Jason Howard** joined the IWK and Dalhousie Medical School in 2009, with appointments in the departments of Surgery and Pediatrics. He collaborates with colleagues at the IWK, Dalhousie's School of Biomedical Engineering, the University of Calgary Scoliosis Research Group, and the Canadian Pediatric Spinal Deformities Study Group on research projects exploring gait in cerebral palsy, non-radiographic methods of monitoring scoliosis, and clinical outcomes. He recently joined the IWK's **Dr. Ron El-Hawary** and **Dr. Jill Chorney** on a large Canadian Institutes of Health Research-funded national study of peri-operative pain in children undergoing spinal fusion surgery for scoliosis.

### **AARNOUD VAN DER SPOEL**, LIPID BIOLOGY

**Dr. Aarnoud van der Spoel** is investigating a class of lipids that plays important roles in genetic metabolic diseases and male fertility. Establishment and investigator awards from the IWK, and equipment support from Dalhousie Medical Research Foundation, helped Aarnoud launch his research program and secure five years of funding from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) after joining the IWK and Dalhousie's departments of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology and Pediatrics in 2009. Aarnoud's findings will help clinicians predict the progression of genetic lipid-storage diseases such as Fabry, make treatment decisions, and counsel affected families. It will also help explain why some men are infertile and allow for more precise diagnoses of male infertility.

### **CHRISTY WOOLCOTT**, PERINATAL EPIDEMIOLOGY

As a new member of the IWK's Perinatal Epidemiology Research Unit, **Dr. Christy Woolcott** is exploring how a woman's reproductive history influences her risk of developing breast cancer. At the same time, she is studying the impact of pre-pregnancy weight and weight gain during pregnancy on obesity risk for both mother and child. Christy joined the IWK and Dalhousie's departments of Obstetrics & Gynecology and Pediatrics in 2010, after completing a postdoctoral fellowship at the Cancer Research Center of Hawaii. Much of her work is funded by an IWK Establishment Grant.