



December 2015

## About me

I'm Christina Nowik, a PGY-4 OB/GYN and a trainee in the clinical investigator program (CIP) at Queen's University in Ontario.

Originally from North Vancouver, I took a bachelor of arts degree in biological sciences at Cornell University before I went to Kingston for medical school. I also have a master of public administration degree from Queen's.

## Why I chose obstetrics/gynecology

I loved the mix of medicine and surgery. I also had some wonderful role models who looked like they really enjoyed their jobs. When I saw an emergency cesarean section as a medical student, I thought it was the coolest emergency ever!

## Clinical Life

### What kinds of clinical rotations are required in your program?

Labour and delivery, ambulatory clinics, general gynecology, gynecologic oncology, maternal-fetal medicine, reproductive endocrinology and infertility, urogynecology, and community OB/GYN are required.

Off service rotations include anesthesia, general surgery, NICU (neonatal intensive care unit), emergency medicine, and internal medicine

### Which of your personality characteristics have been particularly helpful in your field?

The fact that I'm hard-working, an extrovert, and a good multitasker has helped me a lot. It's also good that I'm a morning person!



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### What are the best aspects of your residency?

I have amazing colleagues and the work is both unpredictable and exciting.

## What does a typical day of clinical duties involve?

There is no “typical” day in residency, but here’s a week from my gynecologic oncology rotation:

OB/GYN (gynecologic oncology rotation) – Weekly Schedule at a Glance							
	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
06:00	Back-up call			Rounding			Back-up call
		Rounding	Rounding			Rounding (6:45am)	
07:00					Rounding (7:15 am)		
08:00	Rounding	Operating Room	Pathology conference	Operating Room	Operating Room	Gynecology Clinic	Rounding
09:00			Cancer clinic				
10:00							
11:00	Back-up call						Back-up call
12:00							
13:00						Rounding/ catch-up	
14:00							
15:00							
16:00		Rounding		Rounding	Rounding		
17:00			Rounding				
18:00						Back-up call	
19:00							
20:00							
21:00							
22:00							
23:00							
00:00							

## What are the most challenging aspects of your residency?

There are a lot of perfectionist, type A personalities in OB/GYN, which is great because most people are hard-working and dedicated. However, this environment puts one at high risk of burnout.

## What is one question you’re often asked about your residency?

I’m often asked “How is the job market?” I don’t really know, but our grads who are willing to work outside of the GTA (Greater Toronto Area) seem to do just fine.

## Can you describe the transition from clerkship into residency?

It was extremely stressful taking on that responsibility and having to act authoritative when I didn’t really know what I was doing. I was on NICU first, and I spent the first days making sure that I had an approach to the emergencies one could anticipate on call (e.g., neonatal sepsis).

## What are your future practice plans?

I’m planning to do a fellowship in maternal-fetal medicine (MFM).

## What are your fellow residents like and how do you interact with each other?

We are an exceptionally collegial group. We go out for drinks as a group, have an annual holiday baking night, and generally support each other very well.

## Non-Clinical Life

### What are your academic interests (e.g. leadership activities, research)?

I have a grant from the PSI Foundation of Ontario to investigate the effectiveness of post-partum cardiovascular disease risk counselling in women who are identified to be at increased risk based on obstetrical outcomes.

With RDoC, I chair the resiliency team. I also am Past President, and thus will not be on the RDoC board next year. However, I hope to continue to advance this excellent initiative.

### What is your work-life balance like, and how do you achieve this?

I have a very supportive partner and I live close to the hospital so that I make the most of my time not at work. I certainly don't get to do as much outside work as I would like. I haven't been able to finish a novel in a long time and I don't see my friends as much as I would like. However, I still manage to fit in some exercise (with my partner as a squash/gym/bike buddy!) and I like to cook on the weekends. I prioritize sleep. I pay someone to clean my condo so I almost never spend my precious free time cleaning. It's well worth the money! I've also gotten much better at saying "no" to new commitments.



## For further information

The Canadian Medical Association website features physician specialty profiles for more than 35 specialties. Each contains information about training requirements, demographic trends within the specialty, information about specialists' practices, levels of satisfaction, and more. Available online at <https://www.cma.ca/En/Pages/specialty-profiles.aspx>

Another useful resource is the Canadian Medical Residency Guide, available online at <http://medicine.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/faculty/medicine/departments/core-units/student-affairs/RBC-2011-Canadian-Medical-Residency-Guide.pdf>

*Disclaimer: These specialty profiles illustrate some aspects of the lives of individual residents, and convey their personal perspectives on the challenges, opportunities, and rewards of their chosen fields. These views may not be shared by all residents, as there is tremendous diversity in lifestyle, experience, and interest among the residents in each specialty.*