Yves Lambert MD CCMF FCMF
“There is medicine, but we must not forget the physician.”
Born a few steps away from “Le Faubourg à la mélasse,” right in downtown Montreal, Dr Lambert fondly recalls his childhood. When he was 4 years old, his mother would send him to buy spaghetti sauce at Da Giovanni’s, a well-known Italian restaurant located a few blocks away from his home. Walking back, like a big boy, carrying the precious sauce and change, people would tell him, “Downtown is dangerous!” Oh, please! As a child, Dr Lambert quickly understood that education was his way out of poverty. Dr Lambert was drawn to the humane and community aspects of family medicine.

Dr Lambert now works almost exclusively with teenagers. He is responsible for the care of children and adolescents between the ages of 3 and 18; many have been abandoned or severely abused. Most have been referred by Youth Protection or because of behavioural problems. It is a very difficult setting. The problems are numerous and the resources are scarce. In Quebec, it seems that the government prioritizes the building of mega hospitals, emergency care, and care of the elderly, rather than taking into consideration the needs of children and adolescents. “Not surprising since the voting age is 18—there is no one to defend young people.”

Dr Lambert is an accomplished sailor. He named his first boat l’Air eau Tic (sounds like erotic), which gives a clearer picture of the man and his sense of humour. In 1995, he received an unusual gift from his wife: his first transatlantic crossing. This experience inspired him to think: “There are many difficulties at sea, but there is also the pleasure of being out at sea; there are the nights with a full moon, nights without a moon but a sky filled with stars! There are also the dark nights, all dark ….” Since that time, he has sailed almost all of the seas, and when he speaks of his adventures at sea, we get the feeling that we are listening to Captain Haddock relating his exploits.

“There is the medical profession, but beyond the profession, there is first and foremost the doctor.” La maladie de Sachs—Sachs disease, the depression of a physician depicted in a novel by Martin Winckler—does in fact exist, he says. Medicine can easily become a mortal malady. In Quebec, this past year alone, 12 doctors have committed suicide. Relatively speaking, there are more suicides within our profession than in the general population. Let us look at the demands of the medical profession; the pressures and the expectations are incredible and often exaggerated. We must take care of ourselves. We are not immortal.
Dr Lambert is a family physician at the Centre jeunesse de la Montérégie in Longueuil, Que, and Clinical Adjunct Professor in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Montreal in Quebec.

D’Lambert est médecin de famille au Centre jeunesse de la Montérégie et professeur adjoint de clinique au Département de médecine familiale de l’Université de Montréal au Québec.

(Photos, from left to right)
Dr Lambert meeting with the second-level team for mental health and suicide prevention: (members from left to right) Frédéric Pelletier, Lucie Thivierge, Danielle Dubois, Maryse Pesant, Anne-Marie Cartier, Yves Lambert, Nathalie Couture, and Stéphane Girard.

Ingrown toenails are common among young people in youth centres. They require "patience and time" and a healthy dose of education for these clients, who want everything fixed "here and now."

Dr Lambert with his grandson, Thomas, his wife, Thérèse Baribeau, his son, Jean-Christophe, and dog, Maya.

A family portrait: Dr Lambert, Michelle Snowdon (wife of Dr Lambert’s son Pierre Yves, who is not pictured), Thomas, Thérèse, Jean-Christophe, and Maya.

Photos (de gauche à droite)
D’Lambert rencontre l’Équipe de 2e niveau en prévention du suicide et en santé mentale: (de gauche à droite) Frédéric Pelletier, Lucie Thivierge, Danielle Dubois, Maryse Pesant, Anne-Marie Cartier, D’Yves Lambert, Nathalie Couture et Stéphane Girard.

Les ongles incarnés sont fréquents chez les jeunes des Centres jeunesse. Ils nécessitent « patience et longueur de temps » et demandent une bonne dose d’éducation auprès de cette clientèle qui souhaite tout régler « ici et maintenant ».

D’Lambert avec son petit-fils Thomas, sa conjointe, Thérèse Baribeau, son fils Jean-Christophe et son chien Maya.

Portrait de famille: D’Lambert, Michelle Snowdon (épouse du fils du D’Lambert, Pierre Yves, absent de la photo), Thomas, Thérèse, Jean-Christophe et Maya.

Photos: Andrée Lanthier, Longueuil, Que
Story/Texte: Roger Ladouceur MD MSc CCMF FCMF, Verdun, Que

The Cover Project Canadian Family Physician has embarked on a project to assemble the portrait of family medicine in Canada. Each cover of the journal will feature a family physician chosen at random from our membership list, along with a short essay—a brief glimpse of the person and the practice. Over time, the randomness will become representative and the differences, taken together, will define what it is that all family physicians have in common.