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INMD Update

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From left; John Challis, Stephanie Atkinson, Philip Sherman, and George Mackie

Message from Phil Sherman, INMD Scientific Director

I began the month of March feeling enthusiastic and energized, after returning from an INMD Institute Advisory Board (IAB) meeting held at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver. The IAB meeting began with a Meet & Greet and Poster Session with investigators and students from both UBC and Simon Fraser University (SFU). I wish to thank George Mackie, UBC Vice President Academic & Provost and Don Brooks, Associate Vice President Research for welcoming INMD to the UBC campus. I also wish to thank John O'Neil, Dean of the

Faculty of Health Sciences at SFU, John Challis, President and CEO of the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research, and Brett Finlay UBC Peter Wall Distinguished Professor and a member of the CIHR Governing Council, as well all of the faculty members who participated in this event. It was an honour for us to meet with this outstanding research community, and to interact with the many students who presented posters and took the time to share their work with IAB members.

Recently, we began the practice of inviting Voluntary Health Organizations (VHO) to attend part of the INMD IAB meetings as observers. This well received initiative allows for information exchange and interactions between the IAB and INMD partners. While at UBC, we welcomed the participation of representatives from the Canadian Liver Foundation and the Children with Intestinal and Liver Disorders (CHILD) Foundation.

During this IAB meeting, we also had the pleasure of welcoming Timothy Kieffer from the UBC Department of Cellular and Physiological Sciences to present a research lectureship. Dr. Kieffer showed us his work on cell-based insulin replacement therapy for type 1 diabetes, providing a great example of translational research. Tanya Verrall, a member of the INMD IAB and a researcher at the Saskatchewan Health Quality Council, presented a second research lectureship on Partnerships for Health Systems Improvement (PHSI) in action: from funding idea to research reality. Tanya educated the IAB about pillar 3 related research by showing the tremendous partnerships she has developed with decision makers in the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health. The presentation fuelled the IAB interest in health services research in support of the Continuum of Care strategic priority in the [INMD Strategic Plan](#).

The IAB meeting focused on planning the implementation of the 4 new INMD Strategic priorities. The IAB discussed outcomes of recent workshops held to identify research gaps and opportunities related to *Food & Health* and *Bariatric Care* initiatives. Board members also considered the need to move forward on the other strategic priorities, *Continuum of Care* and *Genes, Environment & Chronic Disease*. The IAB will form *ad hoc* working groups to focus these strategic priorities and to determine targeted funding opportunities arising. I encourage you to liaise with IAB members to discuss any matters relevant to the INMD. If you are unsure of who represents you on the IAB, please see the [INMD website](#).

Best wishes for the end of winter and beginning of spring (at least in some parts of Canada!),

Philip M. Sherman, MD, FRCPC

CIHR NEWS

Researcher News



Enhancements to the Collaborative Health Research Projects (CHRP)

INMD will fund collaborative research projects submitted to the [CHRP program](#) involving any field of the natural sciences or engineering and the health sciences that are determined to be relevant to research on sodium reduction in the food supply - from food safety and preservation, to taste, and texture.

CANADA-HOPE Scholarship Program- Fellowship Awards (2011-2012)

[Application deadline March 31](#)

International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI) North America Future Leader Awards [Call for Nominations](#)

INMD Mandate

The Institute of Nutrition, Metabolism, and Diabetes supports research to enhance health in relation to diet, digestion, excretion, and metabolism; and to address causes, prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, support systems, and palliation for a wide range of conditions and problems associated with hormone, digestive system, kidney, and liver function.

PHSI – A great funding opportunity for INMD researchers performing applied clinical research



Marie-France Langlois,
MD, FRCPC, CSPQ
Sherbrooke University

As a clinician-researcher working in the INMD mandate area, my ultimate goal is to improve the health of Canadians. For many years, our group has been interested in interdisciplinary approaches to optimizing obesity care. Prospective studies of obese patients with metabolic co-morbidities managed by our team reveal that 45-55% lose $\geq 5\%$ of their initial body weight after 12 months; this weight loss is accompanied by important metabolic benefits. However, even if there are interventions that are effective for obesity management, they are not widely available within the Canadian health care system.

Since 2005, our team has been funded by Partnerships for Health System Improvement (PHSI) grants to study models of care delivery. Our aim is to develop a practice network between primary care and expert teams to better integrate patient trajectories for medical and surgical bariatric care. Since the outcome measures of our research project are relevant to health systems' managers and policy makers, we have partnered with decision makers from the university hospital, the regional health authority, the provincial Ministry of Health, and the Canadian Obesity Network. Decision makers are active players in the research program, which should increase the likelihood that the results arising will impact on planning, fiscal allocations, and management as they apply to the health service organization.

PHSI is a terrific research funding opportunity available to teams of researchers and decision makers who are interested in conducting applied and policy-relevant health research, which can be difficult to get funded through the open operating grants competition. CIHR funds PHSI projects in partnership with other health research funders and decision making organizations; in fact, in order to be funded by PHSI, a project must also have funding support (either cash or in-kind) from partner organizations. Of course, developing these partnerships does not happen overnight. After initial contacts, one way that we developed strong partnerships with decision makers involved in our projects was through a CIHR Meetings, Planning, and Dissemination grant that enabled us to find common ground to move the research initiative and grant application forward.

Please do not hesitate to contact any member of the INMD staff for additional information and suggestions regarding how to apply for either PHSI related meeting support or grant awards.

Talking about Science with the Public - Nature versus Nurture: The Impact of Genes, the Environment, and Microbes on Digestive Health



From left: Keith Sharkey, Ken Croitoru, Gil Kaplan, Karen Madsen, Philip Sherman.

INMD was pleased to host a Café Scientifique in Vancouver February 25, 2011, Nature versus Nurture: The Impact of Genes, the Environment and Microbes on Digestive Disease. Three outstanding researchers presented information about their research: Ken Croitoru (Mount Sinai Hospital), Gil Kaplan (U of Calgary), and Karen Madsen (U of Alberta).

Dr. Croitoru presented information about how genes influence disease by sharing information about a large study he is leading on healthy individuals at risk of developing Crohn's disease.

Dr. Kaplan described his research on environmental determinants of Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD). The interplay of microbes that inhabit the gut and genes and environmental factors was the topic of Dr. Madsen's presentation. Questions were raised about the effect of stress on IBD and the gut microbial environment, gluten sensitivity, the link between digestive disease and depression, and the link between the microbial environment and obesity. Dr. Keith Sharkey (U of Calgary) did a fabulous job moderating a dynamic discussion between researchers and the Café participants. Many thanks to our fabulous speakers and the moderator!

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