

A Newsletter from the CIHR Institute of Nutrition, Metabolism and Diabetes

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# INMD *Connections*

## Message from Philip Sherman, INMD Scientific Director



INMD and the Institute of Infection & Immunity were delighted to co-host a national *Microbiome* workshop from **February 12-14, 2014** in Vancouver, British Columbia. The workshop focused

on advances of the *International Microbiome Project*, with emphasis on findings arising from Canadian research teams that were supported by the Canadian Microbiome Project, which is funded by CIHR and partners, including Cystic Fibrosis Canada and the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada. Plenary presentations and small group sessions highlighted advances that have been made in understanding the composition of the microbiota in the mouth, nose, respiratory tract, vagina, on the surfaces of the skin, and along the length of the gastrointestinal tract at a variety of life stages, both in health and in a variety of chronic non-communicable diseases.

The presence of nine CIHR-institute Scientific Directors at the workshop highlights the trans-disciplinary nature of this research theme. The workshop also emphasized how much more can be accomplished by working collaboratively, both nationally and internationally, to identify

the functional implications of observed compositional changes. In this way, new paradigms and molecules can be developed for use in the prevention and management of a variety of conditions that will improve the health of Canadians. It is notable that diet, nutritional considerations, and functional foods were high on the proposed forward research agenda of participants. A working group was created to develop the next steps forward, and a workshop report is expected in due course; we will keep you apprised of future developments.

Philip M. Sherman, MD, FRCPC



## FAREWELL TO DEIRDRE FREIHEIT, INMD INSTITUTE ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER



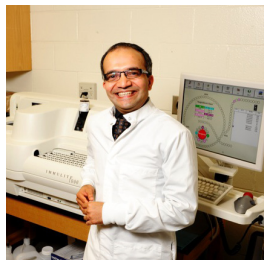
It is with regret that I announce the resignation of Ms. Deirdre Freiheit as a member of our Institute Advisory Board (IAB). Deirdre is a clear and highly effective advocate for research supported by voluntary health organizations in Canada. She provided us with valuable input on the critical perspectives of patients, their families, and donors. She showed us how CIHR can work together with the health charities in a meaningful and mutually beneficial manner.

Effective **March 3, 2014**, Deirdre takes on a new position as Executive Director and CEO of the Shepherds of Good Hope, a community organization in Ottawa. The Shepherds of Good Hope is the largest shelter and soup kitchen in the city, and offers a number of programs and services to marginalized citizens in our nation's capital.

We wish Deirdre the very best in this new endeavour and thank her for the valuable insights and input provided to us during her time as an active and engaged member of our IAB.

# RESEARCHER PROFILE

## Suraj Unniappan, PhD University of Saskatchewan *Pickford Medal in Comparative Endocrinology*



Dr. Suraj Unniappan received the Pickford Medal in Comparative Endocrinology from the International Federation of Comparative Endocrinology Societies (IFCES) at the 17th International Congress of Comparative Endocrinology held in Barcelona, Spain last year. The Pickford medal, named after a distinguished endocrinologist and Yale University Professor the late Dr. Grace Evelyn

Pickford, is awarded every four years. The award was established to recognize a researcher <45 years of age for outstanding contributions in comparative endocrinology. Dr. Unniappan is the fourth Canadian to receive this medal over last four decades. He is currently an Associate Professor and CIHR New Investigator in the Department of Veterinary Biomedical Sciences at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine,

Univ. Saskatchewan. Previously, Dr. Unniappan was on faculty in the Department of Biology at York Univ. (2007-2012). He completed his Ph.D. in Cell Biology and Physiology at Univ. Alberta under the supervision of late Dr. Richard Peter, and then CIHR funded post-doctoral training with Dr. Timothy Kieffer at Univ. British Columbia. The Laboratory of Integrative Neuroendocrinology led by Dr. Unniappan focuses on research themes related to endocrine regulation of energy homeostasis in mammals, neuroendocrine integration of reproduction and metabolism in fish, and the endocrine basis of disease in domestic animals of commercial importance. His research team is characterizing the metabolic and glucoregulatory actions of nesfatin-1, a naturally occurring biologically active protein. Dr. Unniappan's research program is funded by CIHR, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Canadian Foundation for Innovation, Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation and the James H. Cummings Foundation.

## TEAM GRANTS IN BARIATRIC CARE: MANAGEMENT OF SEVERE OBESITY

The CIHR Institute of Nutrition, Metabolism and Diabetes (INMD), in partnership with Alberta Innovates – Health Solutions (AIHS), the Obesity, Diabetes and Nutrition Strategic Clinical Network for Alberta Health Services, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Fonds de recherche du Québec – Santé (FRQS), and the Canadian Obesity Network, are pleased to announce an upcoming joint funding opportunity in support of the creation of innovative, team grants addressing important research questions focused on Bariatric Care.

The research funded will investigate impacts of bariatric surgery as well as medical management of severe obesity in adults (defined as BMI > 35) as well as children and youth. The overall goal of this initiative is to advance comparative health services research in bariatric care to improve the treatment of severe obesity across the continuum of care and the life span,

and accelerate research to better understand the mechanisms underlying the effects of bariatric surgery and weight loss. This funding opportunity will build on the research gaps and opportunities identified at a national workshop held in December 2010, *Developing a Research Agenda to Support Bariatric Care in Canada* (report available on the [CIHR website](#)).

The **Bariatric Care Team Grants** competition will be posted on the CIHR website in **April 2014**. The maximum amount of funding per grant is \$300K/year for up to 5 years; and up to \$4.75M is available for this funding opportunity. Applications will be accepted in two areas: comparative health services research and mechanisms underlying bariatric procedures. We encourage researchers interested in Bariatric Care to consider applying to this funding opportunity. For more information on this RFA, please contact [Mary-Jo Makarchuk](#).

## CIHR PARTNERSHIP AWARD NOMINATIONS 2014

The **CIHR Partnership Award** annually recognizes a partnership that exemplifies excellence. The recipients receive a \$25,000 award in the form of a one-year research grant for advancing the research or knowledge translation activities of the partnership. These partnerships involve organizations from the private, voluntary or public sectors and bring research communities together to create innovative approaches to research questions, develop research agendas that are responsive to the health needs, concerns and priorities of Canadians and/or the global community; and to accelerate the translation of knowledge for the benefit of Canadians and/or the global community. The deadline for nominations is **May 1, 2014**. Details on the eligibility and selection criteria are available on the [CIHR website](#). For more information, contact [Claire Belanger](#).

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The Institute of Nutrition, Metabolism and Diabetes (INMD) 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.

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