



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

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INMD *Connections*

Message from Philip Sherman, INMD Scientific Director



From left: Drs. Sherman, Ungers and O'Connor, Eve Adams, Joseph Mapa (President and CEO, Mount Sinai Hospital), Dr. Ayelet Kuper (mother of twins)

It was with great pleasure that I participated in the public announcement of one of the grants funded by CIHR under the **CIHR-INMD Food and Health Research Initiative**.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Eve Adams, announced funding for a program of research being led by Drs. Deborah O'Connor (Sick Kids, Univ. Toronto) and Sharon Unger (Mt. Sinai Hospital, Univ. Toronto), *Optimizing Mothers' Milk for Preterm Infants*, or "OptiMoM". As Dr. O'Connor stated at the announcement, "CIHR challenged the research community to identify ways that a research program could advance an aspect of nutrition that would significantly impact the health of Canadians in a meaningful way". It was from this starting point that Drs. O'Connor and Unger saw real synergy with INMD's research funding opportunity and what they believed could be accomplished.

OptiMoM is evaluating the benefits, risks and costs of using pasteurized donor human milk, a human milk-based nutrient fortifier and protein fortifiers for feeding very low birth weight infants. Promising advances in nutrition for the very low birth weight preterm infant have been slow to be adopted into daily clinical practice. OptiMoM will address this gap

by bringing together a unique interdisciplinary team of researchers, clinicians, and policy makers with collective expertise in infant nutrition, neonatology, neurology, neuroimaging, endocrinology, psychology, microbiology, management of multi-centre studies, bioethics, and knowledge translation.

The research program will simultaneously evaluate strategies across inter-related domains known to be affected by nutrition, including neurodevelopment, gut health, growth velocity, and body composition. Novel and sophisticated biomarkers of these outcomes, such as neuroimaging, are embedded in the research to enhance the comprehensiveness of assessments. Findings arising will provide key knowledge that can be used to reduce the evaluation and implementation timeline for new and emerging nutritional strategies relevant for optimal care of the vulnerable very low birth weight infant.

I wish to thank Drs. O'Connor and Unger for sharing their excitement about this newly funded research program with Canadians, and wish them success as they embark on this important project.

After a long Canadian winter, wishing you the best for the Spring season,

Philip M. Sherman, MD, FRCPC

THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF GASTROENTEROLOGY: RESEARCH PARTNER RECOGNITION AWARD



Dr. Daniel C. Sadowski, President, CAG

The Canadian Association of Gastroenterology (CAG) presented the CIHR Institute of Nutrition, Metabolism and Diabetes with the *Research Partner Recognition Award* at the Canadian Digestive Diseases Week (CDDW 2014). INMD has been a valued research partner of CAG for 13 years. Together, INMD and CAG are partners in the support and growth of gastroenterology research in Canada. INMD is honoured to have received this award.

American Society for Nutrition Annual Meeting at Experimental Biology 2014

Join INMD **Saturday, April 26 from 8:00 – 10:00 PM** at the *Opening Night University Mixer and Membership Reception*, of the American Society for Nutrition Annual Meeting at Experimental Biology 2014 in the San Diego Hilton Bayfront, Sapphire ABEF. This highly attended and anticipated event kicks off the start of the ASN Scientific Sessions and will be an opportunity for Canadian delegates to network.

RESEARCHER PROFILE

Catherine Birken, MD, FRCPC

Hospital for Sick Children, University of Toronto



In 2009, Catherine Birken, MD, FRCPC at the Hospital for Sick Children, Univ. Toronto received an INMD Start-Up Bridge Grant of \$100K for a project entitled *PROMOTE: preschoolers at risk - obesity and cardiometabolic risk factors: towards early identification*. The objectives of this study were to characterize cardiometabolic factors in preschool aged children, understand the

relationship between these factors and obesity, and the influence of familial and lifestyle factors on these relationships. The study formed the basis of a longitudinal cohort of preschool children to be followed into later childhood through TARGet Kids!, a primary care, practice-based research network. This study will allow further understanding on how these factors change over time, and how early identification

might improve the health of Canadian children. The initial Bridge Grant led to a subsequent four year CIHR operating grant in 2011 and now to a \$1.25M five year CIHR operating grant entitled, *Fit for school, fit for life - child health and school readiness*. Dr. Birken and her research group leveraged the success of an initial Bridge Grant to establish a strong team, demonstrate feasibility, and collect preliminary data to determine if rapid growth in early years of life is associated with increased cardiometabolic risk in preschool children. Dr. Birken notes that receipt of the Bridge Grant gave her confidence that her work was valued by others, and encouragement to continue to work towards a successful operating grant. She also participated in the INMD New Investigator meeting held in 2012, and feels that this venue provided extremely useful advice, and supported ongoing research collaborations. Advice to other New Investigators is to be passionate about their work, not to give up, and to be persistent. Congratulations Catherine!

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 **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 funding opportunity, please contact **Mary-Jo Makarchuk**.

CIHR NEWS

Registration to the 2014 Foundation Scheme Pilot

Researchers who are eligible to apply to the 2014 Foundation Scheme 1st Live Pilot may begin registration to this competition through [ResearchNet](#). Registration deadline is **June 23, 2014**. For registration-related technical difficulties contact [CIHR Support](#) and for more information about the CIHR Reforms of Open Programs and peer review, visit the [CIHR website](#).

Ethics Reform at CIHR: Update

At its February 2014 meeting, Governing Council (GC) concluded its discussion about the best approaches to reinforce CIHR's role in ethics. GC unanimously approved: (1) a new and expanded mandate and membership for its Standing Committee on Ethics (SCE); and (2) a detailed management response to the recommendations of the Task Force on Ethics Reform at CIHR. These improvements will enable CIHR to better deliver on its ethics mandate as set out in the *CIHR Act*. The Message from the President and the CIHR Management Response to the Report of the Task Force on Ethics Reform are on the [CIHR website](#).

JPI Biomarkers Initiative

INMD is pleased to partner with members of the European Union in a Joint Programme Initiative 'A Healthy Diet for a Healthy Life' (JPI HDHL), and to pre-announce the launch of a Joint Call for Biomarkers in Nutrition and Health. The main objective of the Biomarkers in Nutrition and Health (BioNH) call is to support interdisciplinary research and innovative approaches for the validation of biomarkers and the investigation of intake/exposure and nutritional status. More details will be announced on the CIHR website within the next month.

KEY MESSAGES ON THE TRANSITION TO THE NEW OPEN FUNDING PROGRAMS

The research community can find answers about the transition plan and timelines of the **Open Suite of Programs and Peer Review Reforms** on the [CIHR website](#) or by emailing [Roadmap Plan](#).

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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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