













Connections

Message from Norman Rosenblum, INMD Scientific Director

March is National Kidney Month, so it is a great time to reflect on Canadian kidney research, and on the partnerships, networks, and initiatives developed to improve kidney health among Canadians. This year National Kidney Day took place on March 8th, the same day as International Women's Day, and this year's Kidney Month theme is: "Kidneys and Women's Health: Include, Value, Empower". This is appropriate because studies have shown that women are more likely to develop Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) than their male counterparts. CKD affects approximately 195 million women worldwide and it is currently the 8th leading cause of death in women, with close to 600,000 deaths each year.

CIHR recognizes the need to raise awareness about CKD and to highlight the important work of researchers whose efforts focus on reducing the burden of kidney-related ailments on individuals and families through prevention strategies, early detection, and effective treatment. CIHR is proud to work with committed partners, such as the Kidney Foundation of Canada (KFOC), the Canadian Society of Nephrology, and with researchers across Canada to support kidney research through the Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research (SPOR), and the Canadian National Transplant Research Program (CNTRP).

According to the 2016 Canadian Medical Association Nephrology profile, 38% of women were working in the specialized field of nephrology. This number has gradually risen since 1995. With the advent of both World Kidney Day and International Women's Day, I would like to highlight the work of three dedicated, female CIHRfunded researchers, Drs. Adeera Levin, Marie-Josée Hébert, and Julie Ho, who have each contributed greatly to the field of nephrology in Canada.

The SPOR Chronic Kidney Disease network is led by Dr. Adeera Levin from Univ. British Columbia and is supported by CIHR and partners, such as KFOC. The CNTRP program is co-led by Dr. Marie-Josée Hébert

at Univ. Montreal (along with Dr. Lori West at the Alberta Transplant Institute, Univ. Alberta), and Dr. Julie Ho at Univ. Manitoba is among the researchers associated with CNTRP who is helping to improve the lives of those who have undergone kidney transplants. I would encourage you to read their researcher profiles, and to view the videos and other resources that are available on our **website** and on **social media**.



CIHR also supports outstanding kidney research through its open,

investigator-initiated programs. While much has been accomplished, with one in ten Canadians affected by kidney disease, we must continue to pursue research to prevent kidney disease and provide better treatments.

Worman Rosenblum

Norman Rosenblum, MD, FRCPC Scientific Director, CIHR-INMD

CIHR Training Strategy

CIHR has published a training module to highlight the best practices in Training and Mentoring. This module was designed to help potential Program Leaders strengthen the Mentoring and Training portion of their Stage 2 Foundation Grant application. However, all researchers can benefit from the key messages shared in this module as they are ideally positioned to strengthen the culture of training and mentorship across the Canadian health research enterprise. These modules are available on the Learning for Applicants web page in **English** and **French**.

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Researcher Profile

Kara Schick-Makaroff, PhD, MN, BScN, RN

University of Alberta



Dr. Schick-Makaroff completed her PhD in Nursing at Univ. Victoria in 2011, with funding from the Kidney Foundation of Canada (KFOC). She undertook a four-year postdoctoral fellowship, funded by the Kidney Research Scientist Core Education and National Training (KRESCENT) program, before joining the Faculty of Nursing at Univ. Alberta as an Assistant Professor in 2015. Dr. Schick-Makaroff's research aims to enhance quality of life, enrich person-centred care, and improve services for people living with chronic and life-threatening illnesses, particularly chronic kidney disease. A major component of her research involves the routine use of electronic patient-reported outcomes (ePROs) in multidisciplinary care. ePROs are standardized tools for patients to electronically answer questions about their health and quality of life, including physical and psychological symptoms, and social wellbeing. Use of ePROs offers a means to address one of the primary research priorities of Canadian dialysis patients: communication of their quality of life to their clinicians. ePROs are a simple tool that offer significant potential to mitigate concerns that matter to patients. Dr. Schick-Makaroff is a Can-SOLVE CKD and KRESCENT New Investigator. Her research is funded by CIHR (Project Scheme; eHealth Innovation Partnership Program) and KFOC.

What's Norm Reading?

New Research on the Etiology of Chronic Disease

It is widely recognized that complex interactions between environmental and genetic risk factors contribute to the etiology of chronic diseases. In 2014, CIHR-INMD launched the **Programmatic** Grant in Environments, Genes and Chronic Disease, as part of the larger Environments and Health Signature Initiative. One of the grant recipients, Philip Awadalla (Ontario Institute for Cancer Research, Toronto), recently published key findings in *Nature Communications*. These findings were further profiled in the Globe and Mail. In this research article, Dr. Awadalla and colleagues worked with data from Canadian Partnership for Tomorrow Project to demonstrate how environmental exposures, such as air pollution, modify the pattern of gene expression and directly impact disease risk. The findings demonstrate how the local environment can influence disease risk phenotypes, and that an individual's response to environmental challenges can be modulated by genetic variation. CIHR-INMD is pleased to have co-funded this research. (Favé M-J, Lamaze F C, Soave

D et al. Gene-by-environment interactions in urban populations modulate risk phenotypes. 2018. *Nature Communications* 9(1):827. doi:10.1038/s41467-018-03202-2.)

A recently published study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* provides a different perspective on the underlying causes of chronic kidney disease. Calderon-Magalit and colleagues investigated the linkage between childhood kidney disease on the risk of future development of end-stage renal disease (ESRD) using a historical cohort study of adolescents who were followed for 30 years. This research reveals that patients with a history of childhood kidney disease may be at risk for developing adult ESRD, even if they have normal renal function in adolescence, suggesting that kidney injury or structural abnormalities in childhood place patients at risk for developing ESRD later in life. (Calderon-Magalit R., Golan E, Twig G, et al. History of Childhood Kidney Disease and Risk of Adult End-Stage Renal Disease. 2018. N Engl J Med. 378(5): 428-438. doi: 10.1056/ NEJMoa1700993.)

CIHR Funding Opportunities

Nutrition and the Epigenome

INMD is pleased to announce the launch of *Team Grants in Nutrition* and the Epigenome in collaboration with members of the Joint Programme Initiative: Healthy Diet for a Healthy Life (JPI HDHL). The aim of this call is to support transnational, collaborative research projects that gain a better understanding of the dietepigenome relationships and their effect on human health. The total CİHR amount available for the Canadian component of successful projects is \$900,000 CAD, enough to fund approximately two grants. The maximum amount per Canadian component of the grant is \$150,000/year for up to three years. **Application deadline: April** 12, 2018. More details are available on the JPI HDHL website and ResearchNet.

Partner Meetings & Conferences







2018 NATIONAL INDIGENOUS DIABETES CONFERENCE

"Food and Fitness as Medicine" APRIL 16 - 18, 2018 DELTA HALIFAX, HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA #2018NIDC

The 2018 National Indigenous Diabetes Conference brings together Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative Workers, Indigenous front-line workers, lead-ership, Diabetes Prevention Workers, diabetes educators, health managers, dietitians, nutritionists, nurses, academics, industry, and government preps from across Canada to learn about and share practices in diabetes prevention and self-innanagement among Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

Delta Halifax is offering a special group rate at 149.00 CAD per night. This rate is available until March 15, 2018. Please follow this link to book a room: <a href="http://www.marriott.com/meeting-event-hotels/group-corporate-travel/groupCorp.mi?resLinkData=NADA%20Annual%20A6M%20Conference%SEYHZHF%60NADNADA%7CNADNADB%7CNADNADC%7CNADNADD%60149.00%60CAD%60false%602%60415/18%604/19/18%60

Westjet Airlines is offering 10% off Econo and 15% off Plus base fares* for travel between Halifax, Nova Scotia and anywhere WestJet flies in North America. To take advantage of this offer, you will need the discount code listed below. Travel from: April 9 - 25, 2018. Coupon code: YCR3EQS. Promo code: Yor Zell in reference only: YHZ02

Conference website: http://nada.ca/?page_id=1899 Vendor and Exhibitor Registration: http://nada.ca/?page_id=1934 FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT JEFF LAPLANTE - iefflaplante@nada.ca - 204-927-1224

Delegate Registration: http://nada.ca/?page_id=1931 Sponsorship Opportunities: http://nada.ca/?page_id=1936















The CIHR Institute of Nutrition, Metabolism and Diabetes (INMD) invests in research on diet, digestion, and metabolism. By addressing the causes, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of a wide range of conditions and problems associated with hormones, the digestive system, kidneys, and liver function, INMD seeks to improve health for all Canadians.