



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

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INMD *Connections*

Reflections from the INMD Institute Advisory Board Chair



Back Row From Left: Drs. Doug Manuel, Catherine Field, Peter Jones, Bruce Verchere
Front Row From Left: Drs. Chris Kennedy, Gillian Booth, Lise Gauvin, Philip Sherman, Stephanie Atkinson, Rickey Yada (absent from photo: Dr. Stephen James)

As I reflect back on the past six years as Chair of the INMD Institute Advisory Board (IAB), there is immense pride in the success of the institute in promoting innovative research aligned with its strategic plan, forging inter-institute collaborations and national and international partnerships, and fostering outreach to INMD stakeholder communities. Major advances have included: capacity building in obesity research and innovative directions in bariatric care; interdisciplinary research programs in **Food & Health** on topics ranging from the impact of infant nutrition on the microbiome to food allergy and cardiometabolic health in diabetes; and both catalyst and team grants in **Environments, Genes and Chronic Disease**. Membership in the **Joint Programming Initiative Healthy Diet for a Healthy Life** has led to new funding opportunities and transnational collaborations for Canadian researchers.

Members of the IAB engaged in visionary and supporting roles in the functioning of INMD that fashioned strategic initiatives for 2010-2014 and 'refreshed' them for **2015-2018** with a keen eye on emerging science that will translate to improvements in the health of Canadians. Effective communication of IAB members with stakeholder communities brought the CIHR-INMD "face" to meetings with health charities, health professional organizations, trainees, industry, and international groups, such as the International Life Sciences Institute of North America. Mentorship for junior faculty in launching their health research careers was provided by IAB members actively

participating in INMD New Investigator meetings, an event that is highly valued by attendees.

Our final IAB meeting was held at Univ. Ottawa February 22-24, 2016. Dr. Mary-Ellen Harper, Professor in the Dept. Biochemistry, Microbiology and Immunology at Univ. Ottawa, gave an outstanding lecture: *"When a calorie is not a calorie: Mechanisms and implications of variable mitochondrial oxidative phosphorylation efficiency"*. Dr. Hélène Perrault, Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, met with us to share interesting institutional perspectives.

This final IAB meeting was bitter-sweet: while celebrating the successes of INMD, we also tackled issues impacting the future of the institute, including the institute evaluation process and transition planning for the Scientific Director (SD). Members earnestly engaged in thoughtful discussions on institute evaluation with the team from the CIHR Performance & Accountability Branch and with Dr. Nancy Edwards, outgoing SD of the Institute of Population and Public Health. IAB members strongly recommended timely recruitment of a new SD for INMD so as to ensure a smooth transition when Dr. Sherman's term ends on December 31, 2016, and then discussed potential candidates.

On behalf of current IAB members (Drs. Rickey Yada (vice-chair), Gillian Booth, Catherine Field, Lise Gauvin, Stephen James, Peter Jones, Christopher Kennedy, Doug Manuel, and Bruce Verchere), we wish to

acknowledge the outstanding leadership of the INMD Scientific Director, Dr. Philip Sherman and his Assistant Director, Mary-Jo Makarchuk. It has been a supreme pleasure and honour to work as a collaborative team with the entire INMD staff in achieving goals of the INMD mandate and fostering inclusiveness for our entire stakeholder community. The outgoing IAB are committed to continuing our support in ways that will ensure the sustainability and further growth of the research enterprise in the INMD community.

With best wishes on behalf of all of the members of the INMD IAB,



Stephanie Atkinson, PhD, FCAHS
Chair, INMD IAB
McMaster Univ.

Funding Opportunity Team Grant: Biomarkers for Nutrition and Health (BioNH) – 2016

INMD is pleased to announce this ERA NET Cofund: Biomarkers for Nutrition and Health, launched in partnership with members of the Joint Programming Initiative, Healthy Diet for a Healthy Life. This call focuses on the identification and validation of biomarkers that are modulated by diet and that indicate a change in health status and/or the risk of developing diet-related diseases. Biomarkers of physical activity may be considered alongside diet. For more information, please consult [ResearchNet](#) and the [JPI HDHL website](#).

RESEARCHER PROFILE

François-Michel Boisvert, PhD

Canadian Association of Gastroenterology (CAG) – CIHR INMD 2016 Young Investigator Award Recipient



François-Michel Boisvert is an Assistant Professor in Anatomy and Cell Biology at Université de Sherbrooke where his laboratory is studying molecular mechanisms involved in cellular responses to radiation treatment and chemotherapeutic agents used to treat colorectal cancers. François-Michel obtained a MSc in Biochemistry & Molecular Biology at the Univ. Calgary

under the supervision of Professor David Bazett-Jones and his PhD in Experimental Medicine at McGill Univ. with Professor Stéphane Richard. He then completed postdoctoral training with Professor Angus Lamond at Univ. Dundee in Scotland. Using novel proteomics methods, his multidisciplinary research program aims to establish a personalized approach to optimize the treatment of colorectal cancer through the identification of protein biomarkers and protein expression signatures. His laboratory is funded by CIHR, NSERC, Merck Sharp & Dohme, Canada Foundation for Innovation, and the Fonds de recherche du Québec - Santé (FRQS). Congratulations François-Michel!

Team to Address Bariatric Care in Canadian Children: Team ABC³



Principal Investigator,
Geoff Ball (Univ. Alberta)

The prevalence, causes, and consequences of severe obesity in Canadian children are not well understood, and current treatments are not highly effective. These gaps in evidence represent an excellent opportunity for scientists, clinicians, trainees, and decision-makers to come together in this Team Grant focused on optimizing bariatric care for severe obesity in children. The nominated Principal Investigator, Geoff Ball (Univ. Alberta) and co-PI's Catherine Birken, Jill Hamilton (SickKids, Univ. Toronto), Nicholas Holt (Univ. Alberta), Louise Mâsse (Univ. British Columbia), and Katherine

Morrison (McMaster Univ.) have assembled an inter-professional, pan-Canadian research team. Over the next five years, the team will conduct eight studies focused on severe obesity in Canadian children. Data from three independent, electronic databases will be used to delineate the prevalence of severe obesity among Canadian children (The Applied Research Group for Kids [TARGet Kids!], the Electronic Medical Record Administrative Data Linked Database [EMRALD]), and the Better Outcomes Registry & Network [BORN]). Provincial referral data will also be used to determine patient, family, and health system predictors of referral follow-through. Team members will also test the feasibility and effects of a combined home- and community-based lifestyle intervention for parents of children with severe obesity, research that will be performed in partnership with colleagues in public health. For more information, visit [TeamABC³](#).



Co-PI's, Drs. Catherine Birken, Jill Hamilton (SickKids, Univ. Toronto), Nicholas Holt (Univ. Alberta), Louise Mâsse (Univ. British Columbia), and Katherine Morrison (McMaster Univ.)

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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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