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INMD Update

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Message from Phil Sherman, INMD Scientific Director

Almost everyday there is an article in the Canadian press about some aspect of nutrition and healthy eating. During the past year, there have been a number of articles and editorials on sodium; many focusing on the potential public health benefits of reducing sodium in the food supply. Most of the sodium consumed in Canada occurs in processed foods.

In 2005, the Institute of Medicine concluded that the relationship between salt and high blood pressure is direct and progressive, with no apparent thresholdⁱ. High blood pressure is one of the most important risk factors for cardiovascular disease, stroke, and chronic renal diseases. A recent paper based on economic modelling reported that the benefits of reductions in dietary salt are on par with population-wide reductions in tobacco use and could substantially reduce the frequency of cardiovascular events and overall medical costsⁱⁱ. Data from the 2004 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) indicate that the majority of Canadians - over 85 percent of men and 60 to 80 percent of women 9-70 years of age - have sodium intakes exceeding the tolerable Upper Intake Level (UL). It is notable that the results for young children are similar.

I am proud that the Institute of Nutrition, Metabolism, and Diabetes co-hosted a workshop with the Institute of Circulatory and Respiratory Health (ICRH), "*Developing a Research Agenda to Support Sodium Reduction in Canada*", January 25-26 in Toronto. This workshop was successful in bringing together researchers, representatives from government and the food industry from across Canada, to identify research gaps and opportunities to support sodium reduction in Canada.

We learned about new advances in basic biology related to sodium regulation, technical challenges in food science, and opportunities for advancing knowledge-to-action. We also learned from the successes of other jurisdictions, particularly in the United Kingdom, where voluntary targets for sodium reductions in specific food categories have resulted in a reduction in sodium intake at the population level as measured by 24-hour urinary sodium excretion. We also learned about the importance of monitoring sodium reduction, both in the food supply and in populations.

The output from this workshop will be used by the Sodium Working Group, chaired by Health Canada, which has been tasked with developing, implementing, and overseeing a population health strategy for the successful reduction of sodium content in the diet of Canadians. Research is an essential element in the strategy that is being developed, and CIHR is playing a leadership role in supporting the research component of the strategy. The strategy will also include education and voluntary reductions of sodium levels in processed food products and foods that are sold in food service establishments.

The workshop report will soon be available on-line. In the meantime, if you would like more information, please refer to the workshop program and the speaker presentations on our [post-meeting website](#).

Philip M. Sherman, MD, FRCPC

CIHR NEWS

Researcher News

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Important Update:
ResearchNet/Web Forms
Service
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REMINDER
Institute Advisory
Board Member
Self-nomination Application
process
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First Global Symposium on Health Systems Research

[click here](#)

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.



INMD/ICRH Workshop: *Developing a Research Agenda to Support Sodium Reduction in Canada*

January 25-26, 2010

Front from left: **Peter Liu**, workshop co-chair, Scientific Director Institute of Circulatory and Respiratory Health, **Mary L'Abbé**, Vice-Chair of the Sodium Working Group, **Philip Sherman**, workshop co-chair, Scientific Director, Institute of Nutrition Metabolism and Diabetes.

Rear from left: **Gregory Germino**, National Institutes of Health, NIDDK, **Lawrence Appel**, Johns Hopkins University, **Colin Carrie**, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, **Hasan Hutchison**, Health Canada, Chair, Sodium Working Group

INMD Participates in Primary Health Care Summit

INMD was pleased to participate in the **CIHR Primary Healthcare Summit – 2010, 'Patient-Oriented Primary Healthcare – Scaling Up Innovation'** January 18-19, 2010 in Toronto. This summit brought together about 500 people, including policy makers, administrators, primary healthcare providers, researchers, and patient representatives. This summit aimed to foster multidisciplinary collaboration and to catalyze new thinking about primary healthcare research, knowledge translation, and system transformations.

INMD hosted a Workshop at this summit entitled "*Diabetes Care: A Model for Other Chronic Diseases*" The workshop featured Marcia Frank, RN, Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto; Professor Stewart Harris, University of Western Ontario, and Professor Jeffery Johnson, from the University of Alberta. The Workshop was moderated by Paul Belanger, INMD's Assistant Director. The purpose of the workshop was to explore lessons learned in managing diabetes and related comorbidities that make it an applicable model for the care of other chronic diseases in primary health care settings. Each of the three presentations generated insightful questions and a great discussion with workshop participants. INMD thanks each of the speakers for their stimulating and engaging presentations. To access the Summit program and speaker presentations from the INMD sponsored Workshop, please visit the [post-event website](#).

INMD Priority Announcement Funding

INMD congratulates the applicants who have been awarded funding in our three Priority Announcements and acknowledges the hard work and dedication to health research excellence of the many applicants whose applications were highly rated but did not receive funding.

To see who has been funded by INMD in the INMD Priority Announcements click links below:

- [Operating Grant - PA: INMD \(Bridge Funding\)](#) – September 2009 Competition (200909NMD)
- [Start up Assistant Professors Clinicians, New Investigators \(Bridge Funding\)](#) - September 2009 Competition (200909PCN)
- [Obesity and Healthy Body Weight - Operating Grant](#) - September 2009 Competition (200909OOP)

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ⁱ Institute of Medicine (U.S.). Panel on Dietary Reference Intakes for Electrolytes and Water. Dietary Reference Intakes for Water, Potassium, Sodium, Chloride, and Sulfate. 2005. National Academy of Sciences.

ⁱⁱ Bibbins-Domingo K, et al. Projected Effect of Dietary Salt Reductions on Future Cardiovascular Disease. *N Engl J Med* 2010; Jan 20th E-print ahead of publication