



INMD Update

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Message from CIHR President

I am extremely pleased to announce the release of CIHR's new five year Strategic Plan, *Health Research Roadmap: creating innovative research for better health and healthcare*. Improving health and healthcare for Canadians is the driving force behind the new strategic plan which was shaped by the extensive consultations with the Canadian health research community and with other partners from public and private sectors allied in our cause for improved health.

The *Roadmap* will enable CIHR to fulfill its mission to ensure that the results of health research benefit Canadians, and respond to health care challenges facing our citizens. The plan emphasizes four strategic directions for CIHR:

- Invest in world-class research excellence;
- Address health and health system research priorities;
- Accelerate the capture of health and economic benefits of health research; and
- Achieve organizational excellence, foster ethics and demonstrate impact.

The release of CIHR's new strategic plan is very timely for the Institute of Nutrition, Metabolism and Diabetes (INMD) because it shines a light on the path ahead. Under the second strategic direction, *Address health and health system research priorities*, there are five priorities identified:

- (1) Enhance patient-oriented care and improve clinical results through scientific and technological innovations;
- (2) Support a high-quality, accessible and sustainable health-care system;
- (3) Reduce health inequities of Aboriginal peoples and other vulnerable populations;
- (4) Prepare for and respond to existing and emerging global threats to health; and
- (5) Promote health and reduce the burden of chronic disease and mental illness.

Given INMD's mandate, I think there are numerous opportunities for INMD and the broad research community that it represents to align with these priorities. As INMD embarks on the final stages of its strategic planning process, we have a clearer view of the road ahead and I look forward to sharing the ride with you. Together, I am sure that we will significantly contribute to fulfilling CIHR's mandate by creating innovative research for better health and healthcare for all Canadians.

Alain Beaudet, MD, PhD
President of CIHR and Chair CIHR Governing Council

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.

CIHR NEWS

Researcher News
[click here](#)

Upcoming Events

Mark your
Calendar to
join us

INMD presents
a Cafe Scientifique
The Stranger in the Mirror

Tuesday November 10th
@ 5pm
Workman Arts
651 Dufferin Street,
Toronto, Ontario

CIHR PRIORITY ANNOUNCEMENTS: A SUCCESS STORY

Growing BIG ideas and Fruit Flies



Gabrielle Boulianne, PhD, is a neurobiologist working in the Research Institute at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. Her research laboratory studies aging and neurodegenerative diseases using fruit flies. One day, after reading several articles describing how obesity is rapidly becoming an epidemic in this country, Dr. Boulianne had the idea of using her fruit flies to study the genetic basis for obesity. Fruit flies are an easier model to study when looking for genetic mutations, because they reproduce quickly and have a short lifespan and there are specialized tools that have been developed to define genetic mutations in flies. As a result, the simple fruit fly can be used to provide insight into the genetic basis for diseases over their lifespan.

This new idea presented a different approach to studying a complex problem. It was a Sick Kids “New Ideas” seed grant that enabled Dr. Boulianne to begin to explore her hypothesis. She required some preliminary data to be able to demonstrate that obesity could be measured in fruit flies and that mutations in single genes could give rise to obese flies. While her initial idea of distinguishing obese flies from normal flies based on a differential buoyancy assay did not produce the expected results (flies do not like to swim), she was able to develop other techniques for measuring obesity and detecting metabolic changes in fruit flies.

Using these preliminary data, Dr. Boulianne was then successful in obtaining one-year funding from **CIHR** under the **Priority Announcements** for her project entitled “Drosophila models of human obesity” - first from the Institute of Genetics and the following year from the Institute of Nutrition, Metabolism, and Diabetes. This national peer reviewed funding support allowed Dr. Boulianne’s research team to gather more data. As a result, Dr. Boulianne recently was awarded a five-year CIHR operating grant that will allow her to continue work on this project.

“This type of project would never have happened without intramural and national funding opportunities, which support the development of new and innovative ideas” says Dr. Boulianne. “It is a way to foster new areas of research and to encourage established investigators to enter into a new field. Short-term funding support allows investigators to gather preliminary data, to demonstrate proof of principle, and to begin to address a problem. “While new ideas and approaches may be seen as high risk, they can also be transformative when they work”, stated Dr. Boulianne, who also noted that “support for new initiatives is vital and has the potential to have a big impact”. For more information on priority announcements, [visit the CIHR website](#). The team at INMD wishes to congratulate Dr. Boulianne who was recently appointed as Director of the Research Training Center at Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto.



INMD Presents a Cafe Scientifique: “The Stranger in the Mirror”

Is it time to change the way we view eating disorders?

Tuesday November 10, 2009 @ 5:00pm

In partnership with the Mental Health Commission of Canada and in Conjunction with the *Rendezvous with Madness Film Festival*

[click here to see the poster](#)

Feedback on the INMD Newsletter

Help us serve you better by emailing INMDComms@cihr-irsc.gc.ca and let us know what you would like to read about in the future.

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