



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

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# INMD *Connections*

## Message from Philip Sherman, INMD Scientific Director



INMD New Investigators and Mentors.



From left: Dr. Philip Barker (VP Research UBC-Okanagan Campus), Mary-Jo Makarchuk (INMD staff), Drs. Stephanie Atkinson, Marcello Tonelli, Chris Kennedy.

INMD held its annual Partner meeting in conjunction with the 4<sup>th</sup> INMD New Investigator meeting in Kelowna, BC, February 8-10, 2016. Representatives from 13 partner organizations, including health charities, medical professional societies, and 32 new investigators (within the first five years of their first faculty appointment) from across the country participated in the meeting. The objectives and agenda for the New Investigator meeting were planned in collaboration with

INMD partners and refined based on feedback from past meetings. INMD partners provided valuable insights by acting as speakers, panel moderators, and poster judges and they provided mentorship by interacting with new investigators more informally throughout the course of the meeting.

INMD Institute Advisory Board members Stephanie Atkinson (McMaster Univ.), Chris Kennedy (Univ. Ottawa), Lise Gauvin (Univ. Montreal), Doug Manuel (Univ. Ottawa) and Bruce Verchere (Univ. British Columbia) served as faculty. Marcello Tonelli (Univ. Calgary) provided an inspiring keynote address entitled, *Science Rules!* Susan Zimmerman, Executive Director of the Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research, provided a presentation on the framework for responsible conduct of research with a focus on the

The meeting served as a networking event designed to strengthen the professional development of new investigators working in a variety of fields relevant to the INMD mandate. In addition to fostering networking between new investigators, the meeting also facilitated mentoring, both through formal presentations and by informal discussions with established scientists and INMD partners. Interactive sessions included knowledge translation, patient and citizen engagement, building partnerships, issues of work-life balance, strategies for applying to open and strategic health research funding opportunities, and a mock grant review exercise.

Thanks to everyone involved for their active participation in the meeting.

Philip M. Sherman, MD, FRCPC  
Scientific Director, INMD

### College of Reviewers - Expression of Interest: College Chairs

On behalf of the College of Reviewers, we are pleased to announce the launching of the Expression of Interest for the College Chairs. **Deadline to apply: March 7, 2016.** For more information, please visit the [CIHR website](#).



# Food & Health Programmatic Grant: *Optimizing Mother's Own Milk for the Very Low Birth Weight Infant (OptiMoM)*



From left: Drs. Sherman, Unger and O'Connor at the official announcement of the OptiMoM Food & Health grant.

Fully 8% of Canadian children are born preterm, accounting for the greatest cause of morbidity and mortality in childhood. Ensuring the best nutrition for these infants in the neonatal period is required for optimal health, growth and neurodevelopment. Central to this is the provision of mother's own milk. For the fragile, very low birth weight (VLBW) infant, mother's own milk is much more than nutrition - it provides protection against the major morbidities faced in the neonatal intensive care unit, including sepsis and necrotizing enterocolitis. The supply of mother's own milk is often insufficient and has lower protein and micronutrients than required to support the rapid phase of growth of the preterm infant. The goals of the OptiMoM Programmatic Grant are to evaluate the benefits, risks and costs of using pasteurized donor human milk, a human milk-based nutrient fortifier and protein modulars

for feeding VLBW infants. Drs. Deborah O'Connor and Sharon Unger are the nominated principal investigators, who together, have assembled a leading neonatal nutrition research team from across Canada. Dr. O'Connor is a dietitian and scientist at the SickKids Research Institute and Professor of Nutritional Sciences at Univ. Toronto. Dr. Unger is a Neonatologist at Mount Sinai Hospital and an Associate Professor of Paediatrics at Univ. Toronto.

The interdisciplinary OptiMoM research team includes expertise in dietetics, bioinformatics, statistics, microbiology, nursing, psychology, and health economics. Clinical specialties include developmental medicine, endocrinology, gastroenterology, neonatology, neurology, nutrition, and radiology. As a result of this Programmatic Grant, this successful team of clinicians and researchers are expanding their feeding research network from the greater Toronto and Hamilton areas to British Columbia and Nova Scotia, thereby representing >40% of all preterm infants in Canada. Based on the early success of this work, Drs. O'Connor and Unger are recently announced recipients of a CIHR Foundation Grant, which will build on their Food & Health Programmatic Grant.



From left: Drs. O'Connor and Unger at the early construction stages of the Rogers Hixon Ontario Human Donor Milk Bank.

## Launched: Team Grant in Biomarkers for Nutrition and Health (BioNH)—2016



INMD and the Joint Programme Initiative, Healthy Diet for a Healthy Life (JPI HDHL), is pleased to announce a call for *Joint Transnational Research Proposals in Biomarkers for Nutrition and Health*. For more information on

the call, visit [ResearchNet](#) or the [JPI HDHL website](#).

## Canadian Children Inflammatory Bowel Disease Network - *Working for a Cure*

The Canadian Children Inflammatory Bowel Disease Network is a Joint Partnership of the CH.I.L.D. Foundation and [CIHR](#); together they work to contribute to the overall objective of increasing the probability of finding a cure for Inflammatory Bowel Diseases (IBD) in children and to improve quality care and health outcomes for this patient population. Watch the *Working for a Cure - CH.I.L.D. Foundation* [video](#) to learn more about the network and its impact on the IBD research community and the children and families afflicted with these disorders.

**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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## CIHR Media Training Teleconference

Join us for CIHR media training via teleconference!

The CIHR Communications Team is offering English or French media training from **January to March 2016** to interested CIHR-funded researchers who would like to learn about traditional media. Facilitated by our media specialist and former reporter, David Coulombe, this training will provide media relations tools (advice and pitfalls), as well as outreach strategies that researchers can use to communicate effectively with journalists. Visit the CIHR website to [register](#).

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