

Research Update

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Heart & Stroke Research Update

On October 23, members of the six [Mission Critical Area councils](#) met to continue their ongoing discussions and work to identify key priorities where Heart & Stroke can have the greatest impact. Also in attendance were Heart & Stroke staff, co-chairs of the Heart & Stroke [Council on Mission: Priorities, Advice, Science and Strategy](#) (CoMPASS,) Chair and Vice Chair of the Scientific Review Committee (SRC) and co-chairs of the Women's Heart and Brain Health Steering Committee, with close to equal representation of researchers and people with lived experience.

Over the course of a high energy, interactive day participants identified areas where Heart & Stroke can have substantive and positive impact on the lives of people living with heart disease or stroke, or reduce incidence and risk for having these diseases.



In January 2019 CoMPASS convened to further develop and refine the priorities which emerged from the all-Council meeting and recommend the priorities for action to be taken to the Heart & Stroke board of directors in March 2019. These priorities, which will be chosen based on the potential for impact over the next 10 years, will guide our research, policy, systems change, awareness, patient support and/or advocacy work.

MCA Council Member Spotlight



Jennifer Monaghan: Member, Heart & Stroke Vascular Cognitive Impairment council

At 43 years old, Jennifer was taking time from her career as a lawyer to spend with her growing family; then she had a stroke. Over the past six years Jennifer has worked hard to overcome most of the deficits she first experienced, and now is committed to helping to improve outcomes for stroke survivors. In addition to her work on the council, Jennifer also volunteers as a Living with Stroke facilitator, and participated in a discussion panel at the recent World Stroke Congress in Montreal.

Jennifer and her husband Bob recently attended Heart & Stroke's 7th Annual Red Dress event in Kelowna, sharing the story of their journey through Jennifer's recovery from stroke.

Emil Boychuk: Member, Coronary Artery & Vascular Disease council

Ten years ago, Emil Boychuk had his first encounter with heart disease when he experienced angina and subsequently two stents were inserted to relieve two blockages. A year later another blockage was discovered so Emil underwent single by-pass surgery. Today, at 71 years old, Emil is healthy, runs ½ marathons and keeps busy volunteering with cardiac peer support groups and with youth. He is an avid golfer who doesn't let the game spoil the benefits of fresh air, exercise and the beauty of nature.



In December, Emil spoke at the Opening Session of Heart & Stroke's 49th Clinical Update, sharing his personal journey with heart disease as well as the importance of our MCA council work and engaging with people with lived experience.

Research Programs Update

Please visit our [website](#) to read the latest update, as shared by Anne Simard, Chief Mission and Research Officer.

Advancing women's heart and brain health

For the first time in 15 years, Canada has new [guidelines for physical activity throughout pregnancy](#). In the absence of contraindications such as preeclampsia, uncontrolled hypertension and premature labour, following these Guidelines is associated with:

1. Fewer newborn complications (i.e., large for gestational age); and
2. Maternal health benefits, including a decreased risk of preeclampsia, gestational hypertension or diabetes, caesarean section, excessive gestational weight gain and depression.

One of the lead authors, Dr. Margie Davenport, says that funding she received from Health Canada and Heart & Stroke through the Advancing Women's Heart Health Initiative New Investigator Award, allowed her the time to focus on this important work.

Heart & Stroke and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research also recently announced the appointment of four research chairs in women's heart and brain health, including two chairs whose work is focused on Indigenous women. Recipients are Dr. Kara Nerenberg (University of Calgary), Dr. Heather Foulds (University of Saskatchewan), Dr. Bernice Downey (McMaster University) and Dr. Husam Abdel-Qadir (Women's College Research Institute). [Read more](#) about their work.

Early award notifications 2019/20

Early notifications have been released for the 2019/20 Grant-in-Aid (GIA) and Senior Personnel (Provincial and Collective) competitions. Notifications were sent via CIRCULink for GIAs and via email for Senior Personnel awards. These notifications inform applicants of their likelihood of being funded. Early notifications do not, however, guarantee research funding. Official funding notifications will be sent to all applicants by late March 2019.

2019 Heart & Stroke report focuses on vascular diseases and gaps in our health system

The 2019 Heart & Stroke Report *(Dis)Connected: How unseen links are putting us at risk* highlights the connections between heart conditions, stroke and vascular cognitive impairment, and demonstrated that the links between them are much deeper than we previously knew.



(Dis)connected:

How unseen links are putting us at risk

2019 Report on Heart, Stroke and Vascular Cognitive Impairment



This is a groundbreaking study with worldwide implications. A first-ever analysis of hospitalizations and rehospitalizations for all these conditions together in Canada between 2007 and 2017 revealed the connections between heart conditions, stroke and vascular cognitive impairment. In addition, a thorough literature review was conducted.

The research further uncovered gaps in a health system that was designed around a “one-disease” model. For people with multiple conditions, those gaps have resulted in delays in diagnosis or interventions, potentially resulting in more serious illnesses.

Our thanks to researchers and medical experts from coast to coast who contributed to the report as key informants and media spokespeople. [Find the full report](#) and examine key [data](#) on our website.

February is Heart Month

Heart Month is our largest national grassroots campaign. About 30,000 dedicated volunteers across Canada connect with as many as 2 million Canadians, raising approximately \$10 million in donations each year. The generosity of Heart & Stroke donors and volunteers provide the critical dollars that fund Heart & Stroke research – and the next medical breakthroughs.

Thank you to all of you in our Heart & Stroke research community who support Heart & Stroke in so many ways, including as volunteers knocking on the doors of your neighbours!

Join us for a webinar on Friday, March 22nd 2019: Understanding Indigenous Women's & Gender-Diverse People's Health Experiences: A Culturally-Relevant & Gender-Based Lens

Co-hosted by the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) and featuring speakers from NWAC and Dr. Bernice Downey of McMaster University, this session will discuss pre-colonization concepts of health and wellness and how colonization and assimilation efforts affected the health of communities. The session will also cover current social and political realities for Indigenous communities as well as strategies and responses for improving health outcomes.

Details: Friday, March 22nd 12pm-1pm EST

To register, click [here](#).

NOVA SCOTIA

A celebration of research

On November 20th, Heart & Stroke in Nova Scotia honoured this year's recipients of their BrightRed awards during the annual Research Reception in Halifax. Established nine years ago, the BrightRed Student Research Awards celebrate the research of individuals who are early in their careers. This year's awardees (holding their certificates), from left to right are Brittany Roberts, Myles O'Brien, Laura Smith, and Philippe Tremblay. Missing from the photo is Eilidh MacDonald.



From left to right: Dr. Stephen Phillips, Kathryn Rand, Pamela Fonseca, Brittany Roberts, Myles O'Brien, Laura Smith, Philippe Tremblay, Laureen Russell, Christine Baker & Charlotte Comrie



Dr. David Waisman, 2017 GIA recipient and awardee of the Dr. Greg Ferrier Award.

Also honoured during the reception was 2017 NS GIA recipient Dr. David Waisman, who received the Dr. Greg Ferrier Award. Dr. Ferrier was an internationally-respected scientist known for his groundbreaking and innovative research related to heart failure. Since Dr. Ferrier's passing in 2005, his family continues to celebrate emerging research with this annual award in his name. Congratulations to Dr. Waisman and the BrightRed awardees, each of whom receives a \$5,000 gift toward their ongoing research initiatives.