

First Canadian Collaborative Team Conference

Experts Gather in Montreal to Develop International Research Agenda on Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

MONTREAL, April 25, 2018 – Internationally-renowned experts from Canada, the US, the UK, Germany and Australia will participate in the first-ever Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS) Canadian Collaborative Team Conference on May 3–5, 2018 at CHU Sainte-Justine. The conference will bring together approximately 250 basic scientists, clinical researchers, and experienced physicians and healthcare professionals from various disciplines, as well as patients and policy makers, to develop an international research agenda for this debilitating disease, for which there is currently no known cause or effective treatment.

“I am extremely encouraged by the level of interest shown by leading researchers and clinicians, who recognize the importance of establishing research priorities that will advance our understanding of ME/CFS and identify new strategies for treating patients,” says [Dr. Alain Moreau](#), Head of the Viscogliosi Laboratory in Molecular Genetics of Musculoskeletal Diseases at CHU Sainte-Justine Research Center and Scientific Chair of the Conference.

Emphasizing shared solutions, stakeholders and a coalition of experts will discuss research advances and innovations to develop a sustainable ME/CFS research program to improve diagnosis and treatment in Canada and abroad. The conference will focus on:

- Methods to properly diagnose patients with ME/CFS;
- The role of biomarkers in diagnosing ME/CFS;
- Benefits of establishing a biobank to advance research;
- Ways to improve clinical care for ME/CFS patients with severely impaired daily functions; and
- How to initiate, support, sustain and advance research on ME/CFS.

“There is an urgent need to get to the bottom of this devastating disease. To do this, we need many people looking at it from different perspectives and sharing as many ideas as possible so that we are better able to understand ME/CFS at the molecular level,” explains Dr. Ronald Davis, Professor of Biochemistry and of Genetics, and Director of the Stanford Genome Technology Center. “This will impact ME/CFS directly by generating new knowledge as well as awareness about this dreadful disease.”

Sessions taking place on May 4, 2018, for patients will be live-streamed and made available after the conference. The conference is made possible through the support of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and other partners.

“CIHR is committed to improving the health of Canadians. I hope the focused attention provided by this Collaborative Team Conference and the national and international collaborations that ensue will lead to rapid improvements in the lives of the over 500,000 Canadians with ME/CFS,” says Dr. Karim Khan, Scientific Director, CIHR’s Institute of Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis.

About Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

While severe chronic fatigue is one well-known symptom, ME/CFS affects a person’s cognitive, and physical abilities. A primary characteristic of ME/CFS is post-exertional fatigue, where even minor physical or mental activity brings on extreme, prolonged exhaustion and sickness. ME/CFS is recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) and appears in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10); however, it remains poorly understood, little known and stigmatized. ME/CFS is life altering, and in its more severe forms, life threatening.

ME/CFS primarily strikes the neurological, endocrine and immune systems. Individuals affected by ME/CFS start experiencing symptoms in adulthood (ages 30–50); however, some children and adolescents have also been diagnosed with the illness. A 2015 Statistics Canada unpublished Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) reports that just over 560,000 patients were diagnosed with ME/CFS, an increase of 37.6% from 2014. In Quebec, tens of thousands of individuals are affected.

About the conference

The First ME/CFS Canadian Collaborative Team Conference: Advancing an International Research Agenda to Address ME/CFS Research Priorities: From Basic Research to Clinical Practice aims to create a patient-focused research ecosystem targeting ME/CFS through the convergence of disciplines, combining the basic and clinical sciences, engineering and patient needs to develop new diagnostic and therapeutic approaches through collaboration with various stakeholders.

Among the experts presenting at the conference are [Dr. Ronald Davis](#), Professor of Biochemistry and of Genetics, and Director of the Stanford Genome Technology Center; [Dr. Jonas Bergquist](#), Professor, Uppsala University; [Dr. Alison C. Basted](#), Clinical Director at the Institute for Neuro-Immune Medicine at Nova Southeastern University; [Dr. Peter Rowe](#), Director, Children’s Center Chronic Fatigue Clinic, Johns Hopkins University; [Dr. Eleonor Stein](#), Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of Calgary; and [Dr. Derya Unutmaz](#), Professor, The Jackson Laboratory.

To view the program, click [here](#).

For more information about the conference, media accreditation or to schedule an interview, please contact:

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