



About the International Chair on Cardiometabolic risk

Historical overview

The first announcement of the launch of the International Chair on Cardiometabolic Risk was made by Université Laval in March 2006, at a press conference held during the annual meeting of the American College of Cardiology in Atlanta. Since then, the Chair has engaged in several activities at international medical congresses and increased its reach to both scientific and lay communities. The idea of the Chair is closely linked to the soaring rates of heart disease and diabetes around the world. The activities of the multidisciplinary group of experts of the Chair have largely focused on the study of the reasons why patients with an excess of intra-abdominal (visceral) fat are at increased risk of developing cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes irrespective of the presence or absence of classical risk factors such as smoking, hypertension and elevated cholesterol. Thus, the aim of the Chair is to help physicians better identify and treat patients at increased cardiovascular risk levels by taking into consideration, not only the well known risk factors such as smoking, elevated LDL-cholesterol and low HDL-cholesterol, but also, and maybe more importantly, the presence of abdominal obesity and its associated metabolic complications. The overall risk determined by the well known risk factors combined with the additional health burden of the metabolic complications of abdominal obesity has been defined as the patient's global cardiometabolic risk.

Objectives

The objective of this multi-disciplinary academic institution is to stimulate and promote scientific research, medical education and public awareness around cardiometabolic risk. This relatively new term for assessing the overall risk of developing cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes also places emphasis on intra-abdominal fat as crudely estimated by waist circumference. Current medical practice has made tremendous progress in finding ways to control known risk factors such as smoking, hypertension, high LDL-cholesterol, high levels of triglycerides and blood sugar. The therapeutic arsenal for treating each one of these factors is actually quite diverse offering physicians multiple opportunities to find what may work best for each patient.

More recently, obesity has become a clear medical target and many physicians are integrating BMI (body mass index) with its cut-offs for assessing whether a person is overweight or obese. Despite educational efforts around the cardiometabolic risks of obesity, nothing has yet stopped this rising pandemic. This is why the International Chair on Cardiometabolic Risk would like to develop further research, risk assessment tools and patient management strategies which would hopefully this time start to reverse the growing trends around cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.

On-going activities

Directed by Jean-Pierre Després, Ph.D., Director of Research in Cardiology at Hôpital Laval Research Centre, Université Laval, Québec City, Québec, Canada, the International Chair on Cardiometabolic Risk is involved in various local as well as international activities.

Website launch

One of the most important events for 2007 is the launch of the Chair's website:

www.cardiometabolic-risk.org

This launch was announced at EASD (European Association for the Study of Diabetes) 2007 congress in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, where delegates were provided with several opportunities to discover what can be considered the most comprehensive source of information exclusively dedicated to abdominal obesity and cardiometabolic risk. Among them, was also the Chair's first ever congress booth. At the booth, members of the Chair and contributors to the website answered questions and walked visitors through the website. The highlight of the launch was the workshop where participants met executive board members of the Chair and received additional information on the Chair's history, medical aspects of cardiometabolic risk and future plans.

European Media Prize

The objectives of this prize are to reward European journalists who write a comprehensive and in depth article on global cardiometabolic risk and abdominal obesity to help fight the growing pandemic of cardiometabolic disease worldwide.

The jury will reward articles, written in English or in local European language, which best meet the following criteria:

- Offer comprehensive information on cardiometabolic risk factors
- Highlight abdominal obesity and its associated consequences

- Mention waist circumference measurement
- discuss cardiometabolic disease prevention measures

The prize is open to European journalists whose article has been published before or on the latest submission date. Published articles are to be submitted before April 15, 2008. The prize is co-sponsored by the International Chair on Cardiometabolic Risk and the European Association of Journalists.

Internal meetings

Two annual meetings bringing all members together are held each year to review past activities and plan for up-coming events to move the discussion on the vitally important subject of cardiometabolic risk forward. Leading researchers, clinicians, and representatives of scientific bodies and health authorities from around the world are invited to participate in discussions on the underlying causes of cardiometabolic risk. They bring their point of view to the table with the hope of reaching some agreement on important goals for improving patient care in the next decade. The next meeting is scheduled to take place in Paris in December 2007.

International medical congress activities

Presence at major medical congresses is increasing. The Chair was granted a symposium at the EAS (European Atherosclerosis Society) in Helsinki (Finland) in June 2007, held a booth during the EASD congress in Amsterdam, The Netherlands last September 2007 to inform about its new website and was present at the DALM (Drugs Affecting Lipid Metabolism) meeting in October 2007 in New York (USA). The Chair has been invited to hold a Scientific Session on cardiometabolic risk during the Translational Science part of the AHA (American Heart Association) annual meeting in Orlando, Florida (USA) in November 2007.

Preceptorship programs

To further enhance understanding of cardiometabolic risk and allow for greater interactivity among physicians around this topic, the Chair has organized and will continue to offer, on a regular basis, physician preceptorship tutorials. These “train-the-trainer” programs allow leading physicians from a given country, in association with the local medical society, to attend a 3-day course at Université Laval on cardiometabolic risk and abdominal obesity in particular. Attendees are then able to return to their countries where they may train their fellow doctors on what they have learned. These courses provide attendees with the CME (Continuing Medical Education) credits they need, in order to continue clinical practice.