



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 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 multidisciplinary 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 body mass index (BMI) 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.

Activities

Directed by Jean-Pierre Després, Ph.D., Director of Research in Cardiology, Centre de recherche de l'Institut universitaire de cardiologie et de pneumologie de Québec, Université Laval, Québec, Canada, the International Chair on Cardiometabolic Risk is involved in various local as well as international activities.

Website

The Chair's website was launched in 2007 and was announced at EASD (European Association for the Study of Diabetes) 2007 congress in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

www.cardiometabolic-risk.org

The Chair's website is a key component of the strategy. The website is the most comprehensive, up-to-date, and easy-to-use source of information on abdominal obesity and cardiometabolic risk. Intended for both health professionals and the general public, it uses state-of-the-art technology to help visitors better understand the risk factors and markers that must be addressed and the lifestyle changes that must be made in order to prevent abdominal obesity, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. The Chair's website is highly interactive and features free slides, webcasts, and videos in which world-renowned experts discuss themes relevant to cardiometabolic risk. The Chair also publishes the **CMRe**Journal, which is available through its website.

Internal meetings

Meetings bringing all Chair 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 prevention and patient care in the next decade.

International medical congress activities

The Chair held its successful 1st International Congress on Abdominal Obesity in 2010 (ICAO) in Hong Kong, with 300 submitted abstracts and 450 participants. Such early success indicates that there is indeed a need for a meeting which takes a multidisciplinary look at abdominal obesity. The 2nd ICAO will be in Buenos Aires in 2011 and will be a great success. With about 500 abstracts received, we expect between 700-800 participants from about 60 countries.

The Chair is also present at major medical congresses such as: EAS (European Atherosclerosis Society), EASD (European Association for the Study of Diabetes), DALM (Drugs Affecting Lipid Metabolism), AHA (American Heart Association), ACC (American College of Cardiology), ESC (European Society of Cardiology), PMS (International Prediabetes & Metabolic Syndrome), IDF (International Diabetes Federation), CCC (Canadian Cardiovascular Congress) and CDA (Canadian Diabetes Association).

National and local medical congress activities

The Chair is also invited to hold scientific sessions or booths on cardiometabolic risk during national and local congresses: ASO in United Kingdom (Association for the Study of Obesity), SQLNM in Canada (Société québécoise de lipidologie, de nutrition et de métabolisme), MEDEC in France (national congress for primary care physicians) and numerous others.

Preceptorship program

To further enhance understanding of cardiometabolic risk and promote interactions among physicians around this topic, the Chair has organized and will continue to offer physician preceptorship tutorials. These “train-the-trainer” programs allow leading physicians from a given country, in association with their local medical society, to attend a 3-day course at Université Laval focussing on cardiometabolic risk and abdominal obesity. 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.

Sub-committees

The Chair has created subcommittees on the specific issues:

1- Waist circumference: the work of this group led to a publication in *Obesity Reviews* (2008) 9:312-25 entitled *Does the relationship between waist circumference, morbidity and mortality depend on measurement protocol for waist circumference?*

2- Epidemiology: the importance of abdominal obesity in the pathophysiology and clinical diagnosis of the metabolic syndrome. This sub-committee met in Munich during ESC 2008

3- Sugar-sweetened beverages in the prevention/management of obesity/type 2 diabetes: the work of this group has led to several successful symposia and to the publication of an issue of our Journal, the **CMRe**Journal, entirely devoted to the topic of sugar-sweetened beverages.

Media Activities

Over the years, the Chair has also become a reliable and credible source of scientific information for the media. For instance, the scientific director of the Chair, Dr Jean-Pierre Després, is regularly giving interviews to local, national and international journalists on topics relevant to healthy lifestyle habits and prevention/management of cardiovascular disease.

After almost 5 years of activities worldwide, the International Chair on Cardiometabolic Risk has become the multidisciplinary research education platform on abdominal obesity and related cardiometabolic risk. From the enthusiastic and positive feedback received, it is clear that there was a need for this academic organization which will pursue its crusade against the causes and consequences of poor nutritional habits and sedentary lifestyle leading to our current epidemic of abdominal obesity and type 2 diabetes.