



## MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCHERS CONVENE FOR FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON ABDOMINAL OBESITY

### *First-ever Specialized International Congress Reflects Emerging Importance of Abdominal Obesity and Waist Circumference as Cardiometabolic Risk Factors*

**Hong Kong, January 27, 2010** – Clinical and basic science researchers from around the world will convene in Hong Kong from January 28 to 30 for the First International Congress on Abdominal Obesity: “Bridging the Gap between Cardiology and Diabetology.” The congress, sponsored by the International Chair on Cardiometabolic Risk (ICCR) ([www.cardiometabolic-risk.org](http://www.cardiometabolic-risk.org)), is the first-ever specialized forum for sharing new insights and evidence about abdominal obesity and its clinical and public health implications.

The congress will feature panels of world-renown experts in cardiology, diabetology, lipidology, endocrinology and metabolism, obesity and nutrition, who will examine and discuss novel approaches, and share scientific and clinical data to benefit healthcare professionals, clinicians and scientists in their fight against the worldwide epidemic of abdominal obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease.

More than 300 presented abstracts will cover insights into the global status and significance of cardiometabolic risk, the pathophysiology of abdominal obesity and its related complications, algorithms to evaluate and measure risk, and other clinical issues that will impact the way obesity is treated. Specifically, the congress will address multidisciplinary approaches to evaluating abdominal obesity as a key risk factor in the development of diabetes and cardiovascular disease, and to controlling abdominal obesity to help reduce and manage health-related risks.

Congress organizers hope to raise awareness of abdominal obesity as a new risk factor that, along with traditional risk factors, can be modified to reduce the risk of serious diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol and stroke.

“More than two decades of research have established not only that excess visceral fat is linked to cardiometabolic diseases, but also that measuring waist circumference is a simple and accurate way to screen for visceral fat,” said Prof. Jean-Pierre Després, Ph.D., FAHA, Scientific Director of the ICCR, a multidisciplinary academic organization based at Université Laval in Québec City, Canada: “One of the most important and practical messages coming out of this conference is that waist circumference may be an even more significant vital sign than body weight when assessing patients’ long-term risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes.”

Indeed, data being presented at the conference demonstrate the value of assessing waist circumference, along with total body weight and body mass index (BMI), to establish a

comprehensive risk profile. Data also will show that clinically significant reductions in waist circumference can be achieved with a modest 5 to 10 percent weight loss.

Peter Libby, M.D., chief, Cardiovascular Medicine, Harvard Medical School, will discuss pathophysiological research demonstrating that excess visceral fat actually triggers the development of heart disease and type 2 diabetes. Other presented data show that while regulating blood glucose levels improves many outcomes among type 2 diabetes patients, it does not necessarily reduce the risk of heart disease. For these patients, results suggest, reducing visceral fat may be just as important.

“With an aging population and burgeoning obesity rates among children, the stage is being set for an epidemic of cardiometabolic disease among future generations,” said Dr. Libby. “Generating and sharing new research about abdominal obesity is a key step in elevating awareness of this dangerous condition.”

Other guest lecturers will include:

- Christie Ballantyne, M.D., FACC, FACP, Director, Center for Cardiovascular Disease Prevention, Methodist DeBakey Heart Center and Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, USA
- Philip Barter, M.D., Ph.D., FRACP, Director, The Heart Research Institute, Sydney, Australia
- Juliana Chan, M.D., MBChB, FRCP, Professor of Medicine and Therapeutics, Director, Hong Kong Institute of Diabetes and Obesity, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China
- Ulf Smith, M.D., Ph.D., Professor of Internal Medicine, The Lundberg Laboratory for Diabetes Research, Center of Excellence for Cardiovascular and Metabolic Research, Sahlgrenska Academy, Göteborg University, Göteborg, Sweden

Research will also address new insights in managing visceral fat, including studies involving nutrition, physical activity and other lifestyle interventions.

Evidence suggests that the worldwide epidemic of abdominal obesity cannot be handled by the current medical model, in which complications such as hypertension, dyslipidemia, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease are often evaluated and managed in isolation without the proper multidisciplinary resources to improve patients’ nutritional and physical activity habits.

According to Dr. Després, presented research will offer real-world applications to help promote positive lifestyle interventions. “If people become more educated about the role of visceral fat, they will understand that reducing their waist size may keep them healthier than just losing weight,” he said. “For example, if an adult man with a large waist begins exercising regularly, his weight loss may be offset by increased muscle mass. So he won’t necessarily lose weight, but he will reduce his waist circumference, his excess visceral fat, and, consequently, his risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes.”

For information on registering for the First International Conference on Abdominal Obesity, or interviewing conference organizers, guest lecturers or researchers, please contact the ICCR at +1 (418) 656-8711 extension 3183 or [chair.cardiometabolic-risk@criucpq.ulaval.ca](mailto:chair.cardiometabolic-risk@criucpq.ulaval.ca).

## **About the International Chair on Cardiometabolic Risk**

Based at Université Laval, Québec, Canada, the International Chair on Cardiometabolic Risk is made up of 25 world-renowned international scientists. Their goals are to develop awareness and knowledge around the cardiometabolic risk factor in order to improve international patient management. Each year, this group organizes a series of conferences and debates. The Chair also intends to provide physicians and patients with various educational materials.

**About the Quebec Heart and Lung Institute**

Founded in 1918, the Quebec Heart and Lung Institute of University Laval, includes cardiology, pneumology, and the surgical management of obesity departments. The hospital's expertise includes ambulatory and hospital care, teaching, research, and the evaluation of health technologies.

**About the Quebec Heart and Lung Institute Research Centre**

The main goal of the Quebec Heart and Lung Institute Research Centre is to slow the obesity epidemic and the progression of cardiac and pulmonary disease through research and prevention. The Quebec Heart and Lung Institute Research Centre has focused its development around this vision and aims to become the leading North American research centre in cardiology, pneumology, and obesity.

***Note:** Media outreach surrounding the First International Congress on Abdominal Obesity is conducted with the financial support of GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare through an unrestricted grant awarded to the International Chair on Cardiometabolic Risk.*

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