



Canadian Stroke Network
Réseau Canadien contre
les accidents cérébrovasculaires

BRAINwaves



Networks of Centres
of Excellence
Réseaux de centres
d'excellence

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Issue 15

May 31 weekend

2003 AGM moves seaside to St. Andrews

Book early to secure
best flights

The Canadian Stroke Network's Annual General Meeting is heading east this year to Canada's oldest seaside resort town -- St. Andrew's by the Sea. The meeting will be held at the Fairmont Algonquin, a picturesque hotel built in 1889 along Passamaquoddy Bay.

Network Co-ordinator Robin Millbank investigated a number of possible sites in the Maritimes before selecting the historic Algonquin. She negotiated highly competitive rates at the hotel, which has exceptional facilities and accommodations.

Robin suggests that AGM participants plan to book early to secure direct flights to the AGM, as transportation is limited.

Call Robin for more details at 613-562-5800, ext. 8593, or email her at rmillban@uottawa.ca.

In addition to a stimulating scientific program, this year's conference permits a lot of opportunity



Learn more about The Algonquin at St. Andrews by visiting its website.

for networking.

There will be dedicated times for the Themes to hold meetings, as well as plenary sessions with high-profile speakers.

ESRC welcomes new member

Steven L. Wolf, Ph.D. has joined the Canadian Stroke Network's External Scientific Review Committee.

Dr. Wolf is a Research Physiologist at the Centre for Rehabilitation Medicine and a Professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine at Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta, Georgia.

Dr. Wolf has studied the effects of physiological feedback to improve movement and postural

control among neurological patients and older individuals.

Dr. Wolf has published more than 150 refereed publications, has edited seven books related to physiological feedback, and has lectured on this subject throughout the world.

He is past president of the Association for Applied Psychophysiology and has received numerous awards from the American Physical Therapy Association.

Registry shares early results at U.S. stroke meeting

Three abstracts describing the research and experiences of the Registry of the Canadian Stroke Network are to be presented as posters at the American Stroke Association Annual General Meeting, which takes place from Feb. 13 to 15 in Phoenix, Arizona.

The papers were authored under the leadership of Dr. Frank Silver and Dr. Moira Kapral.

The first abstract, entitled *tPA Administration in Consecutive Patients with Acute Ischemic Stroke in the Registry of the Canadian Stroke Network*, looks at tPA usage in Registry sites across Canada. The second abstract shares *Lessons Learned Establishing a*

National Stroke Registry. And, the third paper, entitled *Stroke Care in Canada: Results from the Registry of the Canadian Stroke Network*, probes the regional variations in the provision of evidence-based stroke care in Canada.

In addition, the CSN will participate in two satellite meetings at the conference.

CSN Registry investigators are holding a side meeting to plan the evolution of the Registry.

As well, CSN Business Development Director Kevin Willis will host a meeting with U.S. stroke registries to discuss their shared challenges and experiences.

Sally Brown joins CSN Board

HSFC's CEO brings
many skills to the table

The Canadian Stroke Network is delighted to welcome Sally Brown, CEO of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, to its Board of Directors.

Her nomination will be made official at the 2003 AGM.

Ms. Brown brings to the table her "experience in the world of health policy and administration, knowledge of national initiatives in stroke and an extremely positive attitude towards partnerships," says CSN Executive Director Katie Lafferty.

Prior to joining the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, Ms. Brown spent 10 years at the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), where she served first as Vice-President, External Relations and then as Senior Vice-President.

From 1989 to 1991 Ms Brown was a special advisor in the Prime Minister's Office. From 1984 to 1989, Ms. Brown was a hospital administrator at the Toronto General Hospital becoming Assistant Vice-President, Diagnostic Services in 1987.

Ms. Brown has a Diploma in Nursing from the Toronto General Hospital School of Nursing, and a Bachelor of Arts and a Masters in Health Sciences (Health Administration) from the University of Toronto.

Ms. Brown has served on a number of community agency boards and is currently a trustee of the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation.



Sally Brown

Learn more about CSN Summer Studentships

Application deadline is January 31

Goal: The CSN Studentship Program is targeted to undergraduate and medical students. The goal is to allow students to obtain research experience related to stroke in a CSN-funded laboratory at a Canadian University or affiliated institution. Up to ten awards will be provided beginning in the summer of 2003. The awards, valued at \$5,000, are tenable for a period of 4 months.

Application Process: Applications are made by the proposed supervisor, not by the student. CSN investigators should submit 6 copies of a 1-page Project Outline and the CV and transcripts of the student applicant to the CSN Administrative Centre by January 31, 2003. The project must include involvement in research. Applicants need to have completed at least their first year of university. Each CSN researcher should not supervise more than one student.

Review Process: Applications to the Summer Studentship Program



will be reviewed by a committee comprised of CSN researchers and Network partners. The committee will rate the applications using established criteria (eg., relevance to stroke and the goals of the CSN; feasibility and quality of the project; quality of the candidate; quality of the training environment.) The Committee will forward its recommendations to the CSN Planning and Priorities Committee, which will ensure awards are equitably distributed amongst the Themes.

For more information: If you have any questions regarding the Summer Studentship Program, the application or review process, please contact Robin Millbank at the CSN Administrative Centre at 613-562-5800 extension 8593 or by e-mail at rmillban@uottawa.ca

Research proposals due Jan. 31

The 40 groups invited to submit full research proposals to the CSN for the next round of funding must have everything into the the Network by Jan. 31.

Proposals can be sent to: proposals@canadianstrokenetwork.ca.

The CSN's External Scientific Review Committee is to meet in



Ottawa on Feb. 27 and 28 to review the proposals.

For more information, check out of the front page of the CSN website at

www.canadianstrokenetwork.ca

Contact us

The Canadian Stroke Network welcomes your comments, questions and suggestions for future issues of *Brainwaves*.

Email: cathy@canadianstrokenetwork.ca

CSN mourns passing of Board Member Ramon J. Hnatyshyn

The Canadian Stroke Network plans to honour the memory of board member Ray Hnatyshyn in some "meaningful and ongoing way," says Scientific Director Tony Hakim, who expressed the Network's deep sadness over Mr. Hnatyshyn's death on Dec. 18.

The former Governor General was a valuable member of CSN board.

"He really believed in non-profits and in putting Canada forward," said Dr. Hakim. "He cared a lot about the world of stroke and the potential of research. He was an incredibly enthusiastic and engaged board member. He will be greatly missed."



Stroke Strategy Collaborative draws terrific crowd

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario was pleased to hold The Stroke Strategy Collaborative on October 21, 2002 in Toronto.

The Ministry of Health and Long-term Care provided funding for the event.

This is an annual one-day conference designed to bring together a larger group of stakeholders from across the continuum of care from each region. One hundred and seventy participants attended, representing a 45% increase over the previous year. Sixty per cent of this year's participants have attended one or more Stroke Collaboratives in the past.

This year's keynote speaker was Dr. Renee Lyons, Co-leader of the Canadian Stroke Network's Knowledge Translation Theme V. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Registry of the Canadian Stroke Network provided



Walter Gretzky

provincial updates while the Heart and Stroke Foundation launched the Best Practices Stroke Care Guidelines.

A special guest appearance from Walter Gretzky closed the day.

Participants had the opportunity to choose from 10 different breakout sessions to learn more about regional initiatives and activities.

Overall, the Collaborative motivated participants from across each region as they saw themselves as part of a province-wide effort.

In addition, participants learned about experiences elsewhere that can be applied in their own region or community.

Health on the Line probes stroke

CSN Scientific Director Dr. Tony Hakim and investigator Dr. Mark Bayley, who is a specialist in rehabilitation medicine, are to appear on the Discovery Health program "Health on the Line." The show, which will focus on the world of stroke, is being taped in Toronto on Jan. 23.

The one-hour program will involve a round-table discussion on stroke prevention, care and research.

The program is to be broadcast on the Discovery Health Channel, a digital channel, on Jan. 28 or 30. It will also appear on the Life Network in the early spring.

HSFO brochure provides insight into dysphagia

A new brochure produced by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario focuses on *Improving Recognition and Management of Dysphagia in Acute Stroke*.

Dysphagia, or difficulty swallowing, is one of the most common sequelae following a stroke, affecting as many as 50 per cent of patients.

In Canada in 1994, it was estimated that dysphagia was present in 15,000-21,000 new stroke patients older than 65 years of age, and that only half of these individuals would recover within the first week, with the other half living with dysphagia for months after the stroke, according to the brochure, which was assembled by a group of experts.

"Also, as the Canadian population ages, the incidence of new stroke with dysphagia is expected to continue increasing over the next few years," the brochure states. "The presence of dysphagia in stroke survivors has been associated with increased mortality and with morbidities such as malnutrition, dehydration and pulmonary compromise.

"Emerging evidence indicates that detecting dysphagia in acute stroke survivors improves outcomes such as pneumonia, mortality, length of hospital stay and overall healthcare expenditures."

The brochure can be obtained from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario by calling 416-489-7100. The fax number is 416-489-5123.

Coming events:

- **Focus on Stroke II Application Review** - HSFC Personnel Committee meeting Jan 25-27.

- **CSN Research Proposals** due Jan. 31.

- **28th International Stroke Conference. Stroke Council of the American Stroke Association.** February 13-15, 2003 Phoenix, Arizona.

- **External Scientific Review Committee** meeting in Ottawa: Feb. 27 and 28

- **Human Resources Committee** conference call: March 10

- **55th Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Neurology.** March 29-April 5, 2003. Honolulu, Hawaii.

- **CSN AGM,** St. Andrews, NB, May 31 weekend

On a personal note . . .



Canadian Stroke Network Executive Director **Katie Lafferty** is getting married on February 21 at Montebello, Quebec. Her fiancé is Scott Watson, a health consultant with the Canadian Institute for Health Information. We wish them all the best!



CSN Finance Coordinator **Kelly Countway** gave birth to a healthy baby girl on Dec. 20, 2002, in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Morgan Victoria is the second daughter for Kelly and her husband Brent.



Kelly and Morgan

Stroke newsletter a media hit in 2002

The Canadian Stroke Network is looking for story ideas for upcoming spring and summer newsletters.

The external newsletters, which are circulated to non-profit groups, stroke clinics, universities, hospital presidents, politicians and policy-makers provide a voice for Network researchers and a public face for the CSN.

Consider this: We tracked one story from last year's Spring issue entitled "*Brain Repair: The search for the self-repairing brain*," and found it was picked up in at least eight publications across Canada.

The story ran in its entirety in the *Ottawa Citizen*, the *Western Star* in Corner Brook, Nfld, The *Harbour City Star* in Nanaimo, B.C., the *Expositor* in Brantford, ON, the *Cape Breton Post*, the *Northern Daily News* in Kirkland Lake, ON, *The Cranbrook Daily Townsman* and *The Kimberly Daily Bulletin* in B.C.

Please contact Cathy Campbell (cathy@canadianstrokenetwork.ca) if you have any ideas for upcoming issues, including research, profiles and feature stories.

In the News

A roll in the hay is good for the brain

Globe and Mail (Jan. 3) – Having sex may not make you smarter, but it might boost your brain-cell count just the same.

Researchers at the University of Calgary have discovered in studies with mice that the hormone prolactin, which surges after intercourse, during pregnancy and breast-feeding, stimulates the growth of new brain cells in the front regions of the brain involved in smell. Prolactin can actually double the number of brain cells in the olfactory bulb, where as many as 2,000 new brain cells can sprout in a week during the hormone's peak levels, researchers found.

The research sheds new light on the age-old observation that a pregnant woman can sniff out a garlic-eater across a room. It also offers fresh possibilities for treating strokes and other conditions that result in the loss of neurons, or brain cells.



"Prolactin may be an interesting molecule to augment cell genesis when there are brain lesions or injuries," said **Samuel Weiss**, professor of cell biology and anatomy and senior author of the report, published in *Science*.

Preparations are already under way to test how prolactin might help stroke victims recover.

Stroke drug's unlikely ingredient -- bat spit

The Ottawa Citizen (Jan. 10) – The chemical that vampire bats use to keep blood liquid while they drink it is the key ingredient in an experimental drug to treat people who have just suffered a stroke.

Conventional stroke drugs, which dissolve blood clots blocking blood vessels in the brain, must be used within three hours of the stroke. But the Jan. 10 edition of *Stroke*, a journal of the American Heart Association, says the new clot-busting drug derived from vampire bat saliva gives doctors a "window" of up to nine hours after a stroke hits.

This clot-fighting substance has been known since the 1960s. Now an Australian medical professor has adapted it to dissolve clots that form in the brains of stroke victims, cutting off the blood supply and causing brain damage.

The chairman of the American Stroke Association advisory committee said the bat enzyme could be a useful tool, but more information is needed. "It needs to be understood that this study is limited to mice without stroke and focused only on toxicity," wrote Dr. **Larry Goldstein**, who is a member of the CSN's ESRC.

