



Université de Montréal creates the Pfizer Chair in Atherosclerosis

*Leading atherosclerosis researcher
Dr. Jean-Claude Tardif is first incumbent*

*A \$1.8 million partnership in support of innovative research
into the world's leading cause of death*

Montréal, February 3, 2004 - Université de Montréal today announced the creation of the Pfizer Chair in Atherosclerosis. This Chair will contribute to further research in the promising area of the role of antioxidants and anti-inflammatories in the struggle against atherosclerosis.

The first recipient of the Pfizer Chair in Atherosclerosis is Dr. Jean-Claude Tardif, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Medicine of Université de Montréal, practising cardiologist and Director of the Research Centre of the Montreal Heart Institute (MHI). “Dr. Tardif is a world leader in atherosclerosis research. The influence of his work on atherosclerosis has reached far beyond the borders of Québec and Canada,” said Robert Tessier, Chairman of the Board of the Montreal Heart Institute. “The creation of this Chair is confirmation of the clinical-research and basic-research expertise of researchers at the Montreal Heart Institute, and has special importance for the millions of Canadians affected by atherosclerosis, the leading cause of death in Canada and the world.”

Pfizer Canada Inc. is investing \$1.5 million and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) are providing \$350,000. The partnership is thus contributing a total of \$1.85 million to atherosclerosis research. The Chair’s work will be conducted at the Montreal Heart Institute, where Dr. Tardif leads a research team of about 40 people.

“As a leader in cardiovascular research, Pfizer is very proud to contribute to the advancement of knowledge through Canadian-based research and to support Dr. Tardif’s promising work on atherosclerosis,” said Jean-Michel Halfon, President of Pfizer Canada Inc. “As the Canadian population ages and the burden on our healthcare system increases, it is extremely important to ensure continued long-term research in the field of cardiology.”



The CIHR is committed to forming a partnership with the Montreal Heart Institute and Pfizer Canada to support atherosclerosis research. “We are happy to support Dr. Tardif’s work as his remarkable record in cardiac research has earned him an excellent international reputation. His involvement in the well-established clinical environment of the Montreal Heart Institute and academic position at Université de Montréal, assures us that our investment will bring the best return possible,” said David Brener, CIHR’s Director of Knowledge Translation Programs. The Rector of Université de Montréal, Robert Lacroix, praised the partnership between Pfizer Canada, CIHR and Université de Montréal. “Our *A World of Projects* campaign ended in August 2003 but continues to bear fruit. Université de Montréal represents the highest concentration of research in health sciences in Canada, and owes this prime position to its partnerships with the private sector.”

Countering the ravages of atherosclerosis

The Pfizer Chair in Atherosclerosis’ efforts will concentrate on identifying therapeutic interventions that can stabilize atherosclerosis or even cause it to regress, with a specific focus on oxidative stress, inflammation and endothelial function. Using state of the art imaging methods, the effects of these treatments on vulnerable atherosclerotic plaque will be assessed.

Atherosclerosis develops as a result of the accumulation of cholesterol-rich fatty deposits known as atheromatous plaque, in the arteries. When plaque breaks up, the dispersion of debris can block blood circulation anywhere in the body, which could be fatal. It is estimated that atherosclerosis causes 75 per cent of cardiovascular-related deaths.

Atherosclerosis is the leading cause of death in the world: in 1996, 7.2 million people died of the disease which represents one third of total mortality in industrialized countries. The direct and indirect costs of the disease are huge: \$8 billion in Canada alone in 1993.

The creation of the Pfizer Chair in Atherosclerosis puts the Faculty of Medicine of Université de Montréal at the forefront in this area of cardiology. The Faculty will gain even greater influence in the field of atherosclerosis research. “The skills, expertise and know-how united under this Chair guarantees significant advances. This partnership will be a powerful engine for major discoveries in this area,” added Dr. Jean L. Rouleau, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of Université de Montréal.

About the Université de Montréal

Founded in 1878, Université de Montréal currently has 13 faculties and, with its two affiliated schools, HEC Montréal and École Polytechnique, is the first centre of higher education and research in Québec, the second in Canada and one of the most important in North America. It boasts 2,300 teaching and research staff, 50,000 students and offers over 550 programs in all study cycles, awarding some 2,500 master’s and doctoral degrees each year. Université de Montréal is resolutely dedicated to the advancement and transmission of knowledge.

About the Montreal Heart Institute

The Montreal Heart Institute, which celebrates the 50th anniversary of its founding this year, is a highly specialized health centre dedicated to care, research, teaching, and prevention, and to the assessment and development of new technologies in cardiology. It is affiliated with Université de Montréal. The mission of the Institute's Research Centre is to develop R&D technology programs related to the MHI's vocation. It is home to 44 teams of researchers in the clinical, basic and applied research fields.

About Pfizer Canada Inc.

Pfizer Canada is the Canadian operation of Pfizer, the world's leading research-based pharmaceutical company. Pfizer discovers and develops leading prescription medicines for both humans and animals, as well as many of the world's best-known over-the-counter healthcare products. As a proud member of IMAGINE, Canada's national program to promote corporate giving, volunteering and community support, Pfizer Canada invests in and works with over 1,000 non-profit organizations and community projects across Canada. Pfizer Canada employs more than 2,000 people across the country is headquartered in Kirkland, Quebec.

About the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) is the Government of Canada's premier agency for health research. CIHR's objective is to excel, according to internationally accepted standards of scientific excellence, in the creation of new knowledge and its translation into improved health for Canadians, more effective health services and products and a strengthened Canadian health care system. One of CIHR's 13 Institutes, the Institute of Circulatory and Respiratory Health supports research into causes, mechanisms, prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, support systems, and palliation for a wide range of conditions associated with the heart, lung, brain (stroke), blood, blood vessels, critical care and sleep. For further information please consult: www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca.

- 30 -

For more information:

Sophie Langlois
Press Attachée
Université de Montréal
(514) 343-7704

Doris Prince
Manager, Communications and Public Relations
Montreal Heart Institute
(514) 376-3330, ext. 3074

Sylvie St-Laurent
Senior Manager, Corporate Affairs
Pfizer Canada Inc.
(514) 693-4192

Chantal Laflamme
Communications
Canadian Institutes of Health Research
(613) 946-0927