



**INSTITUT DE
CARDIOLOGIE
DE MONTRÉAL**

APPLIÉ À
Université **UM**
de Montréal

PRESS RELEASE
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A \$6 MILLION GRANT FROM THE FONDATION LEDUCQ

**THE MONTREAL HEART INSTITUTE SPEARHEADS AN
INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT ON ATRIAL FIBRILLATION**

Montreal, August 20, 2007 – The Fondation Leducq recently announced a grant of \$6 million over five years to create an international research network on atrial fibrillation. Eleven specialists, five from centres in Europe and three from centres in North America, will collaborate as part of this network, named the Leducq European-North American Atrial Fibrillation Alliance. Dr. Stanley Nattel, full professor in the department of medicine at Université de Montréal, cardiologist-researcher at the Montreal Heart Institute's Research Centre and holder of the Paul-David Chair for research into cardiovascular electrophysiology, will act as scientific director of the research program and project coordinator for North America.

Atrial fibrillation (AF), a form of arrhythmia in which there is disorganized electrical activity in the atria, the upper chambers of the heart, is the most common cardiac arrhythmia, affecting tens of millions of people worldwide. Atrial fibrillation is associated with an increased risk of death from cardiovascular disease, and is an important cause of stroke, especially in the elderly. In addition, medical treatments are often inadequate or have harmful or unpleasant side effects.

While new and promising procedures, surgical and catheter-based, are being developed, the molecular and cellular basis of the rhythm is not well understood. Recent work on AF suggests that abnormal calcium metabolism within the cells of the conduction system of the heart may provoke AF, and maintain the arrhythmia over time. This multidisciplinary Leducq network will focus on the role of calcium in AF, at the genetic, molecular biological, and cellular levels.

Financing from the Fondation Leducq will make it possible to pool various ultraspecialized resources with a view to helping the network's researchers tackle issues that cannot be addressed individually, e.g. the creation of various technological platforms and pooling of tissue banks and databanks on genetic analyses. Thus, this research program will help to develop considerable synergy, acquire new skills and design more effective therapies to combat and control atrial fibrillation, a heart ailment that is widespread among the population.

About the Montreal Heart Institute

Founded in 1954, the Montreal Heart Institute constantly aims for the highest standards of excellence in the cardiovascular field through its leadership in prevention, ultra-specialized care, training of professionals, clinical and fundamental research and assessment of new technologies. It is affiliated with the Université de Montréal, and its clinical outcomes are among the best in the world..

The MHI Research Centre officially came into existence in 1976 and has made enormous strides since its creation. Today, there are approximately 500 employees, students and researchers at the MHI Research Centre. The MHI's outstanding feature is the balance it achieves between basic research, clinical research and clinical care. Its prime focus areas of research are vascular diseases, myocardial function and electrophysiology. Genomics (including pharmacogenomics), biomarkers and preventive cardiology are other areas of focus. To learn more about the Institute, please visit our website at www.icm-mhi.org.

About the Université de Montréal

Deeply rooted in Montreal and dedicated to its international mission, the Université de Montréal is one of the top universities in the French-speaking world. Founded in 1878, the Université de Montréal today has 13 faculties and together with its two affiliated schools, HEC Montréal and École Polytechnique, constitutes the largest centre of higher education and research in Québec, the second largest in Canada, and one of the major centres in North America. It brings together 2,500 professors and researchers, accommodates more than 55,000 students, offers some 650 programs at all academic levels, and awards about 3,000 masters and doctorate diplomas each year.

About the Fondation Leducq

Created in 1996 and based in Paris, the Fondation Leducq supports research in the area of cardiovascular disease. It's goal is to promote collaboration between researchers from Europe and North America.

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