



PRESS RELEASE
For immediate distribution

Montreal-led international research group awarded \$ 1.8 million for research on Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis

Montréal, October 17, 2012 – Dr. John D. Rioux, researcher at the Montreal Heart Institute (MHI) and Associate Professor of Medicine at the Université de Montréal, has been awarded \$ 1.8M from the prestigious US National Institutes of Health (NIH) in support of his research of the chronic inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD) known as Crohn's disease (CD) and ulcerative colitis (UC), affecting 1 in 150 Canadians. This grant will be used both for the recruitment of patients with IBD and for the identification of key genetic risk factors for IBD.

This research grant was awarded to support basic and clinical research activities of The *Montreal-Boston Collaborative IBD Genetic Research Center*, led by Dr. John Rioux, in collaboration with Drs. Alain Bitton (McGill University Health Centre), Ramnik Xavier and Mark J. Daly (both of the Massachusetts General Hospital and Broad Institute). Specifically this award will enable this highly collaborative group to continue its efforts within the North American/NIDDK IBD Genetics Consortium, co-founded by Dr. Rioux in 2002. Their group has played a pivotal role in the identification of over 150 genetic risk factors for IBD and made significant advances in the understanding their role in health and disease.

“We are extremely pleased that the Montreal-Boston Collaborative successes over the past ten years are once again being recognized and that we are receiving support for another five years of work” stated Dr. Rioux. “Given that research in IBD has been at the forefront of genetic research of common diseases, we expect that these and international research efforts in IBD will not only have significant impact on our understanding this and other chronic inflammatory disease but also continue to provide a research model for other common diseases”.

Specifically, these research funds will be used for the recruitment of patients with IBD and healthy controls for inclusion of their biosamples in the publicly-available NIDDK/NIH Repository that is available to researchers worldwide. This recruitment will be facilitated by a Quebec-wide network of clinical IBD specialists co-founded by Drs. Rioux and Bitton known as the Quebec IBD Genetics Consortium (QIGC). In addition, these funds will be used for the identification of key genetic risk factors for IBD and to pursue innovative work in understanding the biological basis of IBD.

About inflammatory bowel diseases

IBD results from inflammation in the digestive system and with over 230,000 cases, Canada has among the highest frequency of people with IBD in the world. Although it can affect any age group IBD is more likely to develop in teens and adults between 15 and 30 years of age. IBD is a lifelong debilitating condition. It can have a devastating impact on the physical and social lives of those affected.



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