



CENTRE DE RECHERCHE
INSTITUT UNIVERSITAIRE
DE CARDIOLOGIE
ET DE PNEUMOLOGIE
DE QUÉBEC



UNIVERSITÉ
LAVAL



International Chair on
Cardiometabolic Risk

AFFILIÉ À  UNIVERSITÉ
LAVAL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press release

A QUÉBEC SCIENTIST LEADING AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION IN THE FIGHT AGAINST ABDOMINAL OBESITY

Québec, April 20, 2017 – Dr. Jean-Pierre Després, Assistant Director of Cardiology Research at the Québec Heart and Lung Institute Research Centre, Professor at the Faculty of Medicine at Université Laval and Scientific Director of the International Chair on Cardiometabolic Risk (ICCR) will chair an important committee of the International Atherosclerosis Society on the health risks associated with excess visceral fat. This meeting involving international experts and researchers will take place in Prague on April 24. The objective of this committee workshop is to develop a consensus and educational activities on this internal abdominal fat, which is invisible and dangerous for health.

Dr. Després' work has demonstrated the link between a specific form of overweight, visceral obesity, and the risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. A pioneer in this field, he was the first in the late 1980s to suggest that visceral fat, measured by imaging techniques, is the most closely associated with chronic diseases, regardless of body weight. "Our studies tell us that even if someone has a healthy body weight, according to body mass index for instance, the presence of visceral fat can pose a significant health risk," says Dr. Després.

Over the past 30 years, several studies in the United States, Europe and Asia have confirmed the risks associated with visceral fat. These studies have shown that at least 20% of the population with a healthy weight is at risk of developing chronic diseases. According to Dr. Després, "the healthy body weight is therefore an outdated concept. We now need to explore approaches to measure this internal fat with tools such as waist circumference and triglyceride levels in the blood, and educate health professionals and the public about the links between abdominal fat and health problems."

This meeting will be the initial step of a major international mobilization process aiming at taking a stand on this public health issue and at proposing formal recommendations to change medical practice and improve the health of the population.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

Annually, 14,598 people are hospitalized and 119,186 visits are made by outpatients. The catchment population is over 2 million people, or approximately 30% of the population of Québec. Affiliated with Université Laval, the establishment relies on the cooperation and dedication of more than 3,000 employees, doctors, professionals, researchers, managers and volunteers to provide care and quality services to clients in hospital and outpatient services. The Institute programs include care and highly specialized services for the treatment of cardiopulmonary diseases and diseases related to obesity. Doctors and health professionals of the Institute have extensive expertise and contribute to advancing the science of medicine. The Institute also has a mission to evaluate technologies and methods of health intervention.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH CENTRE

The Québec Heart and Lung Institute Research Centre is the only centre funded by the Fonds de recherche du Québec – Santé (FRQS) that regroups three research components (cardiology, respirology and obesity-metabolism) deemed to be a priority because of the considerable economic and social impact of their related diseases. Our centre is unique in that our research components perfectly complement the Institute's clinical missions. This enables health professionals and researchers to work in total synergy to the greatest benefit of patients. Since 2000, the personnel went from 268 to 817 employees, including 157 principal investigators.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CHAIR ON CARDIOMETABOLIC RISK

Launched in 2005 by Université Laval, the International Chair on Cardiometabolic Risk (ICCR) includes 25 internationally recognized experts. All are engaged in promoting knowledge on abdominal obesity and associated cardiometabolic risk, in improving the management of patients and in preventing chronic societal diseases resulting from unhealthy lifestyle habits. The ICCR pursues its mission of studying the causes and consequences of a sedentary lifestyle and of a poor-quality diet, including an overconsumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, which are largely responsible for the epidemic of abdominal obesity, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Each year, the ICCR organizes symposia, educational activities and an international congress for the medical community, health professionals and the lay public.

ABOUT UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL

Université Laval, located in the world heritage city of Québec, is the oldest French-language university in North America. One of Canada's top research universities, it is ranked 7th among the country's institutions of higher learning, with a research budget of over \$330 million last year. Université Laval boasts over 3,685 professors, lecturers, and teaching staff who share their knowledge with some 42,500 students, including 13,000 at the graduate level.

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