



Centre hospitalier de St. Mary
St. Mary's Hospital Center
L'excellence au cœur de nos soins
Caring through excellence



\$600000 for research on delirium in older patients

St. Mary's Hospital Center has received two research grants to fund specific projects in prevention and management of delirium in the elderly

Montreal, February 24th, 2010 – Delirium (also called “acute confusion”) is frequent in older patients, both in hospitals and in long-term care facilities. The research grants awarded to St. Mary's Hospital Center (SMHC) will improve our knowledge about the prevalence and risk factors of delirium, as well as the factors that influence recovery from delirium. It is crucial to recognize and to manage these factors very well in order to improve the outcomes of patients. Currently, many patients continue to suffer from cognitive impairment and poor function long after an episode of delirium.

As a consequence, \$400000 in funding was awarded by the Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR) to the team led by Dr. Martin G. Cole, a researcher in psychiatry and epidemiology at SMHC. He will study the various factors that can influence, in both positive and in negative ways, the recovery of patients after an episode of delirium. “We hope to identify why some patients recover after an episode, while others suffer from long-term consequences,” explains Dr Cole. “This may allow us to improve the rate of recovery and prevent poor outcomes. “

In addition, the team led by Dr. Jane McCusker, Director of the Department of Clinical Epidemiology at SMHC, was awarded \$200000 by the Alzheimer Society of Canada. Its goal is to improve the prevention of delirium by, first, identifying the risk factors leading to it among patients in long-term facilities, and then creating and implementing new detection tools for the patients at risk and innovative preventive strategies. “We hope to provide new clinical tools that will be easy for bedside nurses to use to identify patients at risk and take the appropriate measures to prevent delirium,” explains Dr McCusker.

The elderly represent the vast majority of patients, both in hospitals and long-term care facilities, and their numbers keep increasing. It is becoming necessary to re-think and improve the way that care is delivered to older patients in order to ensure that they benefit from the best possible quality of care, while also easing the pressure on the various clinical services involved. These two studies will

contribute to the expansion of knowledge and shed light on better ways to manage delirium in the elderly.

Dr Martin G. Cole is a geriatric psychiatrist and researcher with the Mental Health Department and the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Community Studies at St Mary's Hospital Center.

Dr Jane McCusker is the Director of the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Community Studies at St Mary's Hospital Center.

St. Mary's Hospital Center (SMHC) is a university affiliated, community hospital which serves a multicultural population. It seeks to provide the highest level of safe patient and family focused care. St. Mary's is an integral part of the Réseau universitaire intégré de santé (RUIS) McGill.

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For more information, please contact:

Isabelle Kling, Information Officer (Research and Clinical), or
Seeta Ramdass, Director of Communications & Public Relations, St. Mary's
Hospital Center
514 734-2665
isabelle.kling@ssss.gouv.qc.ca