

# IMHA On the Move!

CIHR - Institute of Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis

Strategic Plan 2014-2018 Special Edition

## Message from the Scientific Director



As Scientific Director of the CIHR - Institute of Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis (IMHA), it is my great pleasure to introduce our [strategic plan for 2014 to 2018](#). This plan is the culmination of a great deal of consultation with a wide spectrum of IMHA's stakeholders over the past two years.

The plan was launched on October 30 in Toronto at a symposium

which we called Science in Motion (SIM). There, we gathered together stakeholders representing our larger communities

including a full spectrum of researchers from IMHA's mandate, patient and consumer groups, health policy decision makers, charities and other partners, and several international organizational leaders in related areas. Indeed the SIM conference took place along side the annual meeting of the Arthritis Alliance of Canada, and the Gairdner Awards events, which this year honoured the work of Sir Ravinder Maini and Sir Marc Feldmann of the UK, these being researchers who have transformed arthritis treatment worldwide. The primary objectives of the SIM conference were to a) inform stakeholders of the strategic plan; b) gather input regarding potential approaches to implementing the Strategic Plan; and most importantly, c) to engage our stakeholder communities and partners in an ongoing process that will fully implement the Plan.

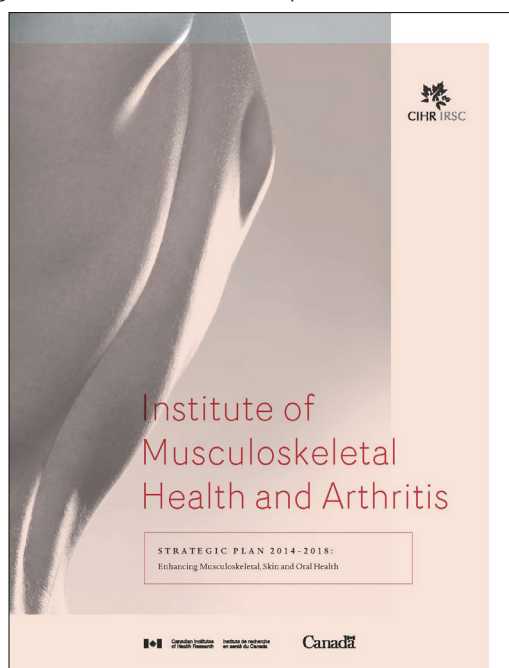
Symposium participants listened to special presentations from distinguished guest researchers regarding IMHA's three new Strategic Priorities for 2014 – 2018. Dr. Gary J. Macfarlane,

Professor of Epidemiology at Aberdeen University, UK, spoke on "Chronic Pain and Fatigue: What research is needed in order to really make a difference." Dr. Katherine Siminovitch, Director, MSH/UHN Clinical Genomics Centre and Centre for Genetic Medicine in Toronto, addressed the priority of Inflammation and Tissue Repair with her presentation on "New understanding and management of autoimmune disease." Dr. Joy MacDermid spoke on the third new priority with her talk, "Disability, Mobility and Health: A road forward."

With these three messages in mind, symposium participants took part in small group discussions wherein they addressed three questions regarding the implementation of the strategic plan as it relates to the participants' areas of research or interest.

The questions were:

1. *What are your suggestions for how the IMHA-specific strategic funding should be allocated within your assigned strategic priority area? [The areas in question were: Chronic Pain and Fatigue/Inflammation and Tissue Repair/Disability, Mobility and Health]. Which programs/tools should be used?*
2. *What are the cross-cutting themes within IMHA's strategic priority area of (Chronic Pain and Fatigue/Inflammation and Tissue Repair/Disability, Mobility and Health) that would allow IMHA to align itself with other multi-Institute initiatives?*
3. *What would be the best way(s) for IMHA's stakeholder communities to have on-going input into shaping both the IMHA-specific and the CIHR multi-Institute strategic initiatives?*



The groups shared their responses with the full assembly and responses were recorded for a report being prepared for release early in the New Year. The insights recorded were of immense

*(Continued on page 2...Scientific Director's message)*

(Continued from page 1...Scientific Director's message)

value to helping IMHA to implement its strategic plan, and we intend to keep stakeholders involved in the process.

The second part of the day was devoted to the important topic of Networks and Partnerships which are essential for all of the CIHR Institutes to consider in this age of globalization.

Dr. Pierre Boyle, Assistant Director of CIHR Institute of Circulatory and Respiratory Health, started the session with a talk on "Networking and Partnering: Lessons learned, opportunities and challenges." A panel discussion on Network and Partnership Opportunities followed featuring panelists Pierre Boyle, Tony Cruz, Christine Janus, Drew Lyall, and Janet Yale with moderator IMHA Institute Advisory Board member, Jeff Dixon.

Dr. Jane E. Aubin, Chief Scientific Officer and Vice President, Research and Knowledge Translation, CIHR, delivered a most insightful and informative lunch address on "CIHR Roadmap II and IMHA" regarding the new CIHR strategic plan and how it particularly affects IMHA's work.

In this special edition of our IMHA *On the Move!* Newsletter, we bring you our strategic plan in brief, a glance back at past research successes and a glimpse forward to what lies ahead. We wish to continue to engage everyone in the IMHA community to help further our overall vision consisting of Capacity Building for researchers, Innovation of health research ideas, and Translation of new discoveries to the maximum benefit of all Canadians.

To keep in contact with us, please subscribe to this newsletter [here](#) and please follow me on [Twitter](#).

Sincerely,



Hani El-Gabalawy MD FRCPC  
Scientific Director  
CIHR Institute of Musculoskeletal  
Health and Arthritis

## Contact Us

Be a part of the IMHA community! Please send news and information and subscribe to our newsletter mailing list by emailing [christine.mazur@med.umanitoba.ca](mailto:christine.mazur@med.umanitoba.ca)

## CIHR - Institute of Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis

University of Manitoba  
290 Brodie Centre  
727 McDermot Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB R3E 3P5  
Tel: 204-318-2550  
Online at CIHR [here](#).

# Strategic Plan Summary

To access the full Strategic Plan, please visit the CIHR-IMHA website [here](#).

## IMHA's Mandate: Musculoskeletal, Skin and Oral Health

IMHA is the hub for strategic initiatives in musculoskeletal (MSK), skin and oral health research in Canada. IMHA's mandate is to support ethical and impactful research to enhance active living, mobility and oral health, and to address the wide range of conditions related to bones, joints, muscles, connective tissue, skin and teeth. Musculoskeletal health is critical for promoting the physical activity needed to maintain mobility, productivity and general health and well-being. Prevalent MSK disorders such as arthritis and osteoporosis can limit mobility and physical activity, creating a vicious cycle of inactivity, degeneration and loss of productivity. Similarly, poor oral health and skin conditions can affect overall health and well-being.

## A Significant Personal Burden That Needs To Be Addressed

Despite being diverse with regard to pathophysiology, MSK disorders are linked anatomically, and, along with certain skin diseases and oral health conditions, share many characteristics: the diseases are almost all chronic, are the most common cause of long-term pain and disability, and exert a significant physical and psychological toll on both those who suffer from them and their families. Musculoskeletal, skin and oral health conditions can affect people from all racial and ethnic populations, and socio-economic backgrounds. Due to the chronic nature of these disorders, individuals can live for many years, or even decades, with the same painful and debilitating condition, necessitating rehabilitation and mitigation strategies. Acute injuries, such as those to bones, joints, muscles, skin, teeth and oral tissues, are all very common and involve slow recovery. Further, MSK injuries and the resulting physical inactivity are risk factors for the development of other ailments and for an increase in long-term health concerns and subsequent health care utilization.

## IMHA Strategic Prioritization: Thinking Big to Address Complex Problems

IMHA's strategy from 2001 to 2013 was focused on better positioning its research community to address Canada's major MSK, skin and oral health challenges. The selected priorities were addressed in the last decade with both small and large initiatives. Over the next four years, IMHA will continue to fulfill its role as a convener and community builder to tackle big questions, and to expand on multidisciplinary and translational opportunities as mandated by the 2011 International Review of IMHA as well as by the priorities of CIHR's strategic plan Health Research Roadmap II: Creating innovative research for better health and health care.

## Values and Approach

Four core values and accompanying approaches will guide IMHA's activities and implementation of priorities: ethics, evidence-informed decision making, performance measurement, and openness and public accountability. IMHA's values and approaches are strongly aligned with CIHR's Road Map II strategic direction of organizational excellence.

(Continued on page 3...Overall Vision)

(Continued from page 2...)

### Overall Vision and Guiding Research Themes

IMHA's vision is to lead MSK, skin and oral health research and knowledge translation to improve the lives of Canadians. IMHA has selected three overarching themes that will help to guide and inform the selected strategic priority areas and support the implementation of Road Map II:

- Capacity Building- Strengthen the MSK, Skin and Oral Health Research Communities
- Innovation- Foster Innovative Research in MSK, Skin and Oral Health
- Translation- Promote the Integration of Research into Practice for MSK, Skin and Oral Health

### The Next Five Years: Our Strategic Investment Priorities

IMHA believes that strategic efforts can be maximized by responding to compelling needs across stakeholder groups and supporting the following CIHR priorities: health innovation for an enhanced patient experience and outcomes, health equity for Aboriginal people, a healthier future through preventive action, and improved quality of life for persons living with chronic conditions. Key strategies include partnering on CIHR Signature Initiatives to tackle complex research questions from a multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral perspective.

## The IMHA Strategic Plan 2014–18 will focus on three strategic priority areas:

### Chronic Pain and Fatigue

- Developing a better understanding of the complex causes and clinical manifestations of chronic pain and fatigue
- Defining optimal strategies of care and management through improved models of care
- Improving our understanding of the impact and consequences of chronic pain and fatigue

### Inflammation and Tissue Repair

- Improving our understanding of the underlying mechanisms of inflammation
- Mitigation of the damage, functional loss and disability that result from inflammation and tissue injury in the muscles, bones, joints, skin and oral cavity
- Developing personalized medicine strategies that achieve the best outcomes for chronic inflammatory and non-inflammatory disorders

### Disability, Mobility and Health

- Prevention of chronic musculoskeletal, skin and oral health disorders through the identification and management of common risk factors
- Improving health, injury reduction and disability management in the workplace
- Reducing musculoskeletal, skin and oral/dental health disparities in vulnerable populations based on ethnicity, gender, age and geography

# Moving Forward from Past Success: New Initiatives

*"What's past is prologue."*

– William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

Knowing our history and where we have been helps us to move forward in innovative ways so that we can address gaps in areas of need, which is critical in scientific research. Last year, CIHR-IMHA, together with the Canadian Arthritis Network, compiled a collection of stories demonstrating successes in CIHR-IMHA-supported research. [Celebrating the Impact of Health Research: Success Stories in Arthritis, Bone, Muscle, Musculoskeletal Rehabilitation, Oral Health, and Skin](#) is a concrete illustration of how Canadians have benefitted from research done in CIHR-IMHA's focus areas. The former flagship theme of physical activity, mobility and health is

still a cornerstone of the current strategic plan, but we now build on it, as with tissue injury, repair and replacement, and pain, disability, and chronic disease.



Even as CIHR-IMHA prepared the final touches of its Strategic Plan 2014-2018 launch, staff members were hard at work developing new initiatives for the future.



Currently, CIHR-IMHA is engaged in furthering Capacity Building and networking for nine successful research teams for the [CIHR Inflammation in Chronic Disease Signature Initiative](#), which it is co-leading with the [Institute of Infection and Immunity](#). Though the teams are from a broad spectrum of research disciplines, significant commonalities exist in the area of Inflammation, such that CIHR-IMHA realized the research teams could benefit from being brought together, which will happen in February, 2015.

CIHR-IMHA is leading the exemplar area of Oral Health for the Pathways to Health Equity for Aboriginal Peoples Signature Initiative, and recently launched a funding opportunity for a [Fellowship in Myalgic Encephalomyelitis / Chronic Fatigue Syndrome \(ME/CFS\) / Fibromyalgia \(FM\) and Chronic Pain](#). CIHR-IMHA is also supporting the Signature Initiative of Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research (SPOR) Networks in Chronic Disease funding opportunity.

These are just a few of the projects with which CIHR-IMHA is kick starting its next five years and setting Science in Motion.



# Science in Motion Multimedia

## Tweeting the Future

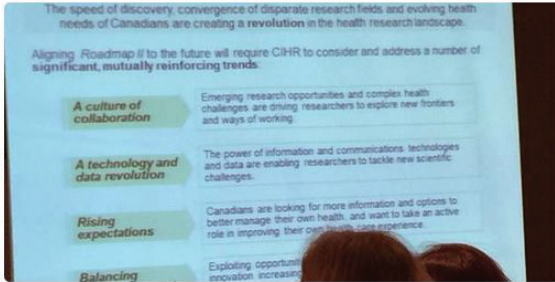


During the symposium itself, IMHA invited immediate feedback and commentary by way of Twitter, using the hashtag #IMHASIM. Here we would like to share a few highlights of that online commentary.

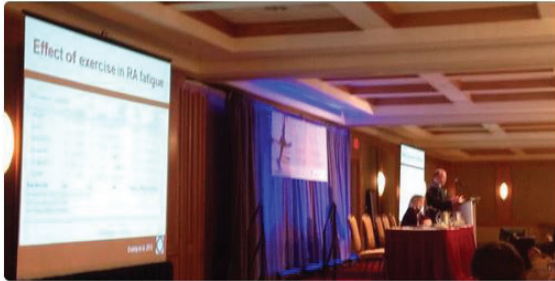
#IMHASIM Dr. Jane Aubin reminds us to read the CIHR Act preamble: [canlii.ca/t/51w4p](http://canlii.ca/t/51w4p)

← 3 ☆ ...

Culture of research collaboration is the future for health research in Canada #multidisciplinary #teamgrant #IMHASIM



Dr. Gary MacFarlane from @UAbertdeenEpi showing many reviews from @CochraneMSK at @CIHR\_IRSC #IMHASIM



#IMHASIM Dr Macfarlane- is there a need to do more research on the connection between chronic pain and mental health/suicide?

← 1 ☆ ...

#IMHASIM genetics will be a good way to know what drugs will work best for patients. What about privacy?

← 1 ☆ ...

#IMHASIM personalized medicine will change healthcare. Genetics will provide a framework.

← ☆ ...

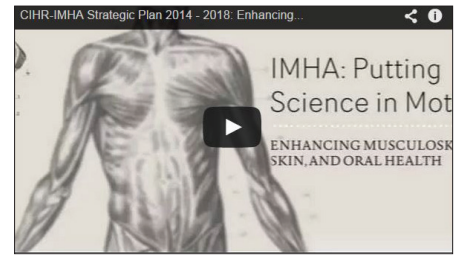
Dr. Hani El-Gabalawy at #IMHASIM single institute initiatives are small but IMPACTFUL.



← 1 ☆ ...

## A Glimpse of the Next Five Years

CIHR –IMHA believes connecting with Canadians about the health research its community carries out for their benefit is important. To quickly and effectively get the message out, we created a video that summarizes our strategic plan so that anyone can come to understand who we are and what we do. Please watch the [video here](#).



## Science in Motion Photo Gallery Engagement

Photography by Gary Beechy of BDS Studios Inc.



Networking



Innovation



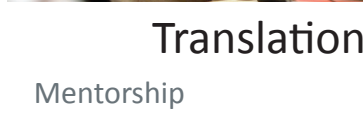
Partnership



Translation



Sharing Knowledge



Mentorship



Capacity Building

(Photo Gallery continued on page 4.)

## Further Engagement

CIHR-IMHA is committed to engaging its community of stakeholders at all levels. Going forward from the Science in Motion symposium held in Toronto on October 30, IMHA will produce a report which will be made available to everyone.



# Science in Motion Photo Gallery

(Continued from page 4)



Science in Motion participants in animated discussion.



Dr. Han El-Gabalawy.



Dr. Katherine Siminovich: Inflammation and Tissue Repair.



Dr. Gary J. Macfarlane, University of Aberdeen, UK: Chronic Pain and Fatigue.



Panel on Network and Partnership Opportunities. Left to right: Pierre Boyle, [Tony Cruz not visible], Christine Janus, Drew Lyall (speaking), Janet Yale, Jeff Dixon (Moderator).



Dr. Pierre Boyle on "Networking and Partnering: Lessons learned, opportunities and challenges"



Dr. Joy MacDermid: Disability, Mobility and Health



Guest Speaker Dr. Jane E. Aubin, Chief Scientific Officer and Vice President Research and Knowledge Translation, CIHR.



IMHA Advisory Board and staff members at Science in Motion. Left to right front: Liz Stirling, Debora Matthews, Tanya Gallant, Monique Gignac, Alain Moreau, Debbie Feldman, Nicole Szajcz-Keller, Elizabeth Robson. Middle: Han El-Gabalawy, Michelina Violi, Stephen Robinovitch, Christine Mazur, Dawn Richards, Joy MacDermid, Youwen Zhou. Back: Marc Grynpras, Marc Pouliot, Rashmi Kothary, Jeff Dixon.