



News Release

For immediate release

University of Toronto researcher receives The Wilfred and Joyce Posluns Chair in Women's Brain Health and Aging

December 14, 2016 – Ottawa, Ontario – Canadian Institutes of Health Research

Women today suffer from depression, stroke and dementia twice as much as men, and an astonishing 70 percent of new Alzheimer's patients are women. The fact that these conditions affect more women suggests a role for biological sex differences that put women at higher risk for brain disorders and influence their response to treatment. Evidence also suggests that cultural and social factors as well as personal life experiences contribute to the higher rate of brain-related diseases in women.

Today, the Honourable Jane Philpott, Minister of Health, announced that one of Canada's leading experts in the field of neuroscience, sex and gender will carry out a new research program that seeks to improve our understanding of why women are more affected by brain disorders. The program will also inform the development of new strategies to prevent, diagnose and treat diseases that affect the brain and promote brain health in women.

Dr. Gillian Einstein, a researcher and associate professor of psychology at the University of Toronto, will lead this research program as the recipient of The Wilfred and Joyce Posluns Chair in Women's Brain Health and Aging. The Chair is an initiative of the late Wilfred Posluns' Family Foundation and the Women's Brain Health Initiative. It is supported through a partnership between the Foundation, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Alzheimer Society of Canada, and the Ontario Brain Institute.

Dr. Einstein was selected through a competitive process launched in March 2016. She will receive a grant of \$1 million over five years to support her research program.

Quotes

"Dementia, mental illness and other brain disorders are a major health challenge. They affect millions of Canadians and their families. I applaud Dr. Einstein for her commitment to improving women's health and wish her every success as she pursues her ambitious and incredibly valuable research program."

Jane Philpott

Minister of Health

“It is an honour to be working with CIHR within their Dementia Research Strategy, the Ontario Brain Institute, the Women’s Brain Health Initiative, Alzheimer’s Society of Canada, and the Posluns Family Foundation to increase sex and gender awareness through research, mentorship, education, and knowledge translation initiatives. Together, we will enhance Canada’s position as an internationally-recognized focal point for significant advances in women’s brain health research.”

Dr. Gillian Einstein

Wilfred and Joyce Posluns Chair in Women’s Brain Health and Aging

Department of Psychology & Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto

“We’re thrilled with the appointment of Dr. Einstein as research chair and trust that the work she’ll be doing will help find the necessary answers for women to maintain their cognitive vitality throughout their lives.”

Joyce Posluns

“Having someone of Dr. Einstein’s caliber build capacity in research that accounts for gender and sex on brain health and aging will greatly enhance women’s health. This type of research is important to better understand the unique risks between the two sexes, why differences exist, what the different outcomes are and whether they should be treated differently.”

Lynn Posluns

Founder & President, Women’s Brain Health Initiative

“We are proud to be part of this important research initiative through CIHR’s Dementia Research Strategy. The work of Dr. Einstein and her team will complement the research being done by other dementia researchers in the country. It will contribute to our collective effort to find effective treatments for dementia, which affects women and women caregivers disproportionately, and make life better for all Canadians living with dementia and their families.”

Dr. Yves Joannette

Scientific Director, CIHR Institute of Aging

Chair, World Dementia Council

“We’re excited to help advance research on women’s brain health through our Alzheimer Society Research Program. Dr. Einstein and her team will help fill a significant gap in dementia research. When we better understand how dementia affects women, we may be able to improve and develop more targeted treatments for every Canadian living with this disease.”

Debbie Benczkowski

Chief Operating Officer, Alzheimer Society Canada

“Dr. Einstein is an exceptional researcher and we are very excited to support her in leading this important initiative. Her work will place much-needed focus on women’s brain health as well as contribute to ongoing initiatives investigating dementia, which disproportionately affects women.”

Dr. Tom Mikkelsen

President and Scientific Director, Ontario Brain Institute

Associated Links

[Dementia – Government of Canada](#)

[Dementia Research Strategy – Canadian Institutes of Health Research](#)

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The [Canadian Institutes of Health Research](#) (CIHR) is the Government of Canada's health research investment agency. CIHR's mission is to create new scientific knowledge and to enable its translation into improved health, more effective health services and products, and a strengthened health care system for Canadians. Composed of 13 Institutes, CIHR provides leadership and support to more than 13,000 health researchers and trainees across Canada.

The [Posluns Family Foundation](#) is a private charitable foundation established by the Posluns Family. The Foundation distributes funds for religious, charitable and educational purposes, and in pursuit of those purposes, supports health care programs, medical research, community organizations, educational institutions, and other organizations and agencies making a difference locally and abroad.

The [Women's Brain Health Initiative](#) (WBHI) is a Canadian charitable organization inspired to combat women's brain health disorders through investment in focused, innovative research at leading institutions across Canada. WBHI supports urgently-needed, leading-edge, peer-reviewed research on women's health and brain aging, to improve diagnostic and treatment methods. Ultimately, this research will improve brain health outcomes for women throughout the world. WBHI's awareness and fundraising initiatives include education programs and sales of the iconic Hope-Knot. All monies raised are managed by WBHI in accordance with its board-approved governance policies on investments and distribution of funds.

The [Ontario Brain Institute](#) is a provincially-funded, not-for-profit research institution seeking to maximize the impact of neuroscience and establish Ontario as a world leader in brain research, commercialization and care. Convergent partnerships are created between researchers, clinicians, industry, patients, and their advocates to foster discovery and deliver innovative products and services that improve the lives of those living with brain disorders.

The [Alzheimer Society of Canada](#) is the leading nationwide health charity for people living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Active in communities across Canada, the Society offers help for today through our programs and services, and hope for tomorrow by funding research into the cause, prevention and a cure.