

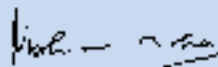
Foreword

India is facing the rising burden due to Noncommunicable diseases, and overweight and obesity in childhood is an important forerunner to adulthood chronic diseases. Early life interventions in adopting healthy lifestyles are a promising approach. The Council endeavors to work with partners towards translating the knowledge to policy and practice for prevention and control of Noncommunicable diseases.

Under the ICMR-CIHR Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), ICMR aims to facilitate research initiatives which would benefit local populations and have global applications as well. This collaboration would build competency as well as networks to address important health conditions like Obesity as equal partners in pooling expertise and resources.

I am pleased to see the report of the ICMR-CIHR collaborative workshop on “**Childhood Obesity and Noncommunicable Diseases**” held in India from 14th to 16th January, 2009. This marks the beginning of joint research adventures between the scientists of both countries on a range of issues deliberated and recommended in the workshop.

I wish the coordinators of the program at ICMR and CIHR all the success in implementation of the recommendations.



(VM Katoch)



Vishwa Mohan Katoch

MD, FNAsc, FAMS, FASc., FNA
Secretary to the Government of India
(Department of Health Research)
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
DIRECTOR-GENERAL, ICMR

Message

The ICMR and CIHR signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate and work together in several areas of health research. This has great relevance in view of a large Indian community in Canada. This workshop was held as the first activity towards this agreement.

The global spread of obesity is likely to affect India in a big way unless it is halted. The country has an unfinished agenda of undernutrition, and is now facing the double burden with rising prevalence of overweight/obesity as shown by repeated National and local level surveys. There is a high burden of Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) eg. Heart diseases, hypertension, stroke, diabetes, cancers amongst the adult population. Obesity is an important under-runner in the development of most of the NCDs. The Council has addressed the related NCD research issues through its own Institutions and by funding individual investigators from various institutes in the country over several decades.

Recognizing the timeliness of scaling up research in childhood obesity, this endeavor invited participants from a wide range of expertise from India and Canada on a common platform to present, discuss and suggest areas of collaborative research for investigators from both countries. The wide canvas for research will encourage multi-disciplinary approaches to address surveillance, determinants, genetic/epigenetic, animal studies, study of behavioral and societal aspects so as to improve overall health.

I am confident that investigators from India and Canada will benefit from mutual expertise and resources to address global issues while achieving national goals. The cooperation of the CIHR team leaders and participants for developing a long term research agenda on childhood obesity is highly appreciated.



Bela Shah

Scientist G & Head
Division of Noncommunicable Diseases
Indian Council of Medical Research, New Delhi,
INDIA

Message

International partnerships are of core importance to CIHR, and to IHDCYH in particular. Collaboration with international partners provides access for Canada's health research community to international knowledge networks and helps strengthen Canada's scientific, cultural, political, and commercial links to nations in the developed and developing world.

CIHR's collaboration with India started in 2005 with the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Indian Council of Medical Research to fund health research collaboration between Canada and India. Obesity was identified as one of areas of common interest. The causes and prevention of child obesity is one of IHDCYH's strategic priorities, and this joint workshop has been the first concrete step toward implementing the ICMR-CIHR collaboration. Investigators from both countries exchanged knowledge and ideas, ranging from fetal and early child antecedents of obesity to the evaluation of preventive interventions at the family, school and community levels.

The Canadian delegation was extremely warmly received and hosted by the ICMR Coordinators. They have been extraordinarily enthusiastic about our collaboration. I also want to thank the Canadian investigators who attended the workshop for their time, effort, and active participation in helping us design a collaborative funding program. I am confident that the program will lead to excellent science and aid both countries to understand the causes and mechanisms underlying the epidemic of obesity in both countries, and to formulate strategies and policies to combat the epidemic.



Michael S. Kramer,

Scientific Director,
Institute of Human Development, Child
and Youth Health,
Canadian Institutes of Health Research, CANADA