

2.5 mg folic acid + 50 mg vitamin B6, 1 mg vitamin B12, or placebo. Study participants were recruited from countries with mandatory fortification of food with folate, such as the United States and Canada, comprising about 70% of the study population. The rest came from countries (Brazil, western Europe, Slovakia) without mandatory folate fortification. Participants were followed for 5 years. Homocysteine levels did, in fact, decrease in the active-treatment group—but active treatment did not reduce the risk of major CV events in patients with established vascular disease, nor did it significantly decrease risk of death from CV causes. There were also no differences in outcomes in any subgroup analyses, including those from countries with or without folate supplementation or those with higher or lower baseline homocysteine levels.

LDL-C Levels: Still Far from Goal. Data culled from CardioMonitor, the Brigham & Women's Hospital, Boston, MA, and TNS Healthcare, U.K. indicate that LDL-C levels remained significantly above goal in highest-risk patients in 2004. This conclusion was based on a sample of 4,676 patients with CVD from 250 primary care physicians and 50 cardiologists. Extrapolation of that data to the entire U.S. population suggests that approximately 67 million individuals have CVD or CAD risk factors, with 35 million of those exhibiting overt disease. Of some 26 million individuals with 2 or more risk factors, 24% had LDL-C levels >130 mg/dL despite 33% of that group on statins. We are very clearly far short of treatment goals recommended by NCEP, ACC, AHA, or ESC. More aggressive disease recognition, treatment, and public education remain vital.



International Chair/Committee on Cardiometabolic Risk Announced

To highlight the growing worldwide problem of cardiovascular disease and diabetes and to promote research and education on prevention, assessment and optimal management of patients at elevated cardiometabolic risk, the Université Laval, Quebec City, Canada announced the launch of the first international and multidisciplinary chair on cardiometabolic risk.

Dr. Jean-Pierre Després, University Laval professor and Director of research in cardiology at Laval Hospital Research Center, is the Chair's scientific director: "The mission of the Chair is to highlight the growing problem we call cardiometabolic risk. The Chair will provide a platform for integrated research into cardiometabolic risk to define a set of risk factors and markers that will allow physicians to develop strategies to better assess and manage this risk."

Cardiometabolic risk describes the overall risk of developing cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes; combining classical risk factors such as smoking, high cholesterol, and hypertension with a more recently identified set of factors closely related to a specific form of fat accumulation: abdominal obesity. When simultaneously present in a patient,

these cardiometabolic risk factors are strongly predictive of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is a leading cause of death, responsible for an estimated 17 million deaths each year. This number is expected to rise to 24 million by 2030. Although remarkable progress has been made in the management of CVD, it remains, along with type 2 diabetes, a critical public health issue worldwide. Through various educational activities, scientific projects and professional meetings, the Chair will offer a unique forum for everyone interested in fighting those diseases. The Chair will hold two key meetings every year in which leading researchers, clinicians, scientific associations, and health policy makers will be invited to discuss the underlying causes of cardiometabolic risk and to develop goals for improving patient care.

In addition to Dr. Després, the Chair's board of experts includes multidisciplinary scientists Bryan Brewer (Washington Hospital Center), Peter Libby (Harvard Medical School), Philip Barter (The Heart Research Institute, Sydney), and Jean-Claude Coubarde (Fournier, Paris) as Executive Director.