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## **McGill discovery climbs the “Red-Hot Research Papers” charts**

*McGill/Génomique Québec diabetes breakthrough ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in the world  
in prestigious year-end review*

The influential *Science Watch* newsletter has named a McGill study on the genetic origins of type 2 diabetes as one of their “Red-Hot Research Papers of 2007.”

The study, published in the journal *Nature* last February, was led by Dr. Rob Sladek of the McGill University and Génomique Québec Innovation Centre, along with Dr. Constantin Polychronakos of the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) and colleagues at the Pasteur Institute, l’Université de Montréal, Imperial College London and the Montreal Diabetes Research Center.

*Science Watch*, a publication of Thomson Scientific, which tracks trends and performance in basic research, produces an annual listing of the most cited medical and scientific papers worldwide over the course of the previous year. The Sladek study ranked 5<sup>th</sup> overall.

"A discovery of this magnitude requires excellent researchers, innovative protocols, state-of-the-art facilities, committed support, and focused determination on the part of investigators," said Denis Thérien, McGill Vice-Principal (Research and International Relations). "We have assembled all this at the McGill University and Génomique Québec Innovation Centre, and Drs. Sladek and Polychronakos and their colleagues have done all of us extremely proud."

"Congratulations to Dr. Sladek and his team! We are extremely proud to be associated with this exceptional researcher, who personifies the research leadership Québec has taken in the field of genomics," said Mr. Paul L'Archevêque, President and CEO of Génomique Québec. "Dr. Sladek's results, which spring directly from research co-financed by Génomique Québec, demonstrate the impact that genomic research can have in improving healthcare."

Dr. Sladek and his colleagues identified four genes that increase the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Individuals suffering from type 2 diabetes produce insulin normally, but their bodies lose the ability to use it, leading to abnormally high glucose levels and increased risk of blindness, heart disease, stroke, nerve damage and other health problems. Type 2 is the most commonly diagnosed form of diabetes, affecting nearly 2 million Canadians and more than 100 million people worldwide.

The researchers systematically searched the entire human genome for diabetes-predisposing genes, comparing hundreds of thousands of DNA fragments from diabetic and non-diabetic individuals. They identified four specific gene types on chromosomes 8, 10 and 11.

“These genes are involved in the function of the beta cell in the pancreas, which is the cell that makes insulin,” Dr. Sladek explained. “We hope to develop some new tests for diabetes, but perhaps even more important, it’s going to tell us more about how the pancreas works, or *doesn’t* work in diabetes, which may help us develop new drugs for people who develop the disease.”

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