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McGill University and Génome Québec Innovation Centre nets key funding for ground-breaking epigenetics research

The Government of Canada and Génome Québec awards funding for researchers at the Innovation Centre

The McGill University and Génome Québec Innovation Centre will receive generous support from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and Génome Québec to continue its trailblazing research in the field of epigenetics. The support announced today by the funding partners will go toward examining how environmental factors can alter the expression of our DNA and have life-long effects on human health.

The Canadian Epigenetics, Environment and Health Research Consortium (CEEHRC) is a new national initiative formed to investigate gene-environment interactions and the role they play in health. CIHR launched the Epigenomic Platform Centre program to leverage Canada's existing genomic sequencing expertise, in partnership with Génome Québec and Genome BC. It supports two Epigenomic Mapping Centres (EMCs) and two Epigenomic Data Coordination Centres (EDCCs).

"I would like to thank the Government of Canada, CIHR and Génome Québec for the support they are providing to advance the leading research being conducted at the McGill University and Génome Québec Innovation Centre," said Prof. Heather Munroe-Blum, McGill Principal and Vice-Chancellor. "This continued funding is important in bringing the benefits of Canada's expertise in genomics and epigenetics research to society. We are collectively dedicated to innovation and excellence in this field, and to building on our nation's international leadership."

Génome Québec's President and CEO, Marc LePage, was delighted with the investment announced today. "The McGill University and Génome Québec Innovation Centre is an icon of innovation here in the province. Thanks to the expertise and technological infrastructure found at the Centre, Québec will be ready for the next wave of genomics, which includes epigenetics as one of its major components. Today, we are seeing more and more human health applications. In this regard, the Centre plans on playing a key role in providing innovative solutions that will benefit all Canadians."

"This funding will maintain Canadian leadership in epigenomics, a field that is key for deciphering how the conditions in which we live can control expression of our genes and influence our health and well-being," said Prof. Mark Lathrop, Scientific Director, McGill University and Génome Québec Innovation Centre

Mark Lathrop, McGill University: Epigenomic Mapping Centres (EMCs)

Prof. Mark Lathrop, Scientific Director, McGill University and Génome Québec Innovation Centre, with Prof. Tomi Pastinen, Associate Professor and Canada Research Chair in Human Genetics, and Prof. Michael Meaney, James McGill Professor and Associate Director of the Douglas Institute Research Centre, will receive \$5,985,000 to study how the genome deploys hundreds of different programs leading to different fates in cell development. Prof. Lathrop and his team will use epigenome mapping to understand interactions between environment and genome in human blood cells, to interpret diseases impacting metabolism using tissue samples and to study how epigenetic changes can alter function of the brain.

Guillaume Bourque, McGill University: Epigenomic Data Coordination Centres (EDCCs)

Prof. Guillaume Bourque, Bioinformatics Director, McGill University and Génome Québec Innovation Centre, and Associate Professor, with Alan Evans, Professor, Neurology and Neurosurgery, and co-investigators at the EDCC, will develop a framework that leverages Compute Canada's national resources to support large-scale processing, sharing and visualization of epigenomics data. The platform will enable epigenetics researchers around the country to use this valuable resource. Prof. Bourque and his team will receive \$1,470,533.

About the McGill University and Génome Québec Innovation Centre:

The McGill University and Génome Québec Innovation Centre is a world-class research facility for genomics. Founded in 2002, the Centre has developed world-renowned expertise in complex genetic disorders, such as cardiac disease, asthma and Type 2 diabetes, and has become a resource and networking site for various research initiatives in human health, forestry, infectious diseases, agriculture and environment. Major funding for the McGill University and Génome Québec Innovation Centre is provided by the Government of Canada through Genome Canada, and the Government of Québec. To learn more about the Centre, visit: <http://qqinnovationcenter.com/>

About epigenetics:

Epigenetics is the study of changes in the way information stored in DNA is expressed, without direct modification of the genetic code. Some epigenetic changes are part of normal development and aging, but environmental health scientists are most concerned with studying how environmental factors can cause negative epigenetic changes.

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