

MEDIA RELEASE

Landmark study launched on key health issues of Surrey's South Asian Population

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Surrey, BC – A landmark study has been launched between Surrey Innovation Boulevard, the Fraser Health Authority, the South Asian Health Institute and the Sagol Neuroscience Research Center of Sheba Medical from Israel. The joint research project will explore the links to diabetes that lead to dementia, with a focus on the South Asian population. The partnerships on this project are a direct result of the City of Surrey's recent Trade Mission to Israel.

"The Memorandum of Understanding signed today speaks directly to the necessity for collaboration in research," says City of Surrey Mayor Dianne Watts. "We know that through the work of the South Asian Health Institute we see issues around diabetes and the link to dementia. We need to be proactive in terms of living healthy lifestyles. The joint research project between Israel, India and Canada is a rare opportunity for this level of collaboration to take place and I'm really proud to have it done here in Surrey."

"This international effort will bring expertise that has been developed in the last 10-15 years," says Dr. Michal Beeri, Director of the Sagol Neuroscience Research Center with Sheba Medical of Israel. "With the high prevalence of diabetes in the South Asian population, the goal is to find the risk factors, biomarkers and genetics, and if we discover what they are we are going to be able to put interventions and treatments in place to prevent dementia from happening."

Surrey is home to the largest South Asian population in Canada, a demographic that suffers from unusually high incidence of diabetes. Surrey is also home to the Fraser Health Authority's South Asian Health Institute which will serve, along with the Canada India Network Society (CINS) as a major supporting link in this project.

"Health care is a global issue," says Dr. Andrew Webb, VP of Medicine for the Fraser Health Authority. "This sort of initiative where we can interact globally allows us the opportunity to see how others have tackled the issue. Israel is the first for innovation and their ability to implement innovation is leading edge in the world."

"CINI 2014 is pleased to facilitate and support strong civil society programs between Canada and India and build global collaboration with international joint projects like this landmark South Asian study. We are excited that these first steps are being taken to study the links between diabetes that leads to dementia," says Dr. Arun Garg, Chair of CINI 2014 and CINS.

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The partnership will link to the comprehensive Israel Diabetes and Cognitive Decline study with the ongoing Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging, a large long-term study that follows 50,000 people aged 45-85 for more than 20 years.

The Memorandum of Understanding was signed today by Mayor Dianne Watts on behalf of Surrey Innovation Boulevard, Dr. Andy Webb, VP of Medicine on behalf of Fraser Health Authority and the South Asian Health Institute, and a very special guest joining us from Israel, Dr. Michal Beeri, Director of the Sagol Neuroscience Research Center, Sheba Medical on behalf of Sheba Research Fund, Sagol Neuroscience Research Center.

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