



THE CHAMPLAIN
CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE
PREVENTION NETWORK

RÉSEAU DE PRÉVENTION DES
MALADIES CARDIOVASCULAIRES
DE LA RÉGION DE CHAMPLAIN

NEWS RELEASE

How heart-healthy are people in our region? CCPN releases latest Atlas of Cardiovascular Health

Ottawa, August 31, 2011 – Residents of the Champlain Region, particularly those living in communities and rural areas outside the city of Ottawa, need to understand the risk factors for heart disease and stroke and ensure that collectively, action is taken to address them, according to a report released by the Champlain Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Network (CCPN) housed at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute.

The CCPN has been working over a five-year period to help the 1.2 million people living in the Champlain Region of Eastern Ontario to prevent and manage key risk factors for cardiovascular disease – smoking, physical inactivity, unhealthy eating habits, overweight and obesity, diabetes and blood glucose, abnormal blood cholesterol, and high blood pressure.

One of the major tasks of the CCPN is to monitor trends throughout the region. The Network's latest report, *Atlas of Cardiovascular Health in the Champlain Region 2011*, is the fourth in a series to give an up-to-date snapshot of the heart health of Champlain residents. It is based on data from many sources, including Statistics Canada, federal, provincial and local data, and the Champlain Community Heart Health Survey, one of the CCPN's key initiatives which collected lifestyle and physical measures data on more than 1,400 Champlain residents.

“Cardiovascular disease continues to be the leading cause of death, hospitalization, and disability – locally and nationally,” says Dr. Andrew Pipe, Chair of the CCPN and Chief of the Division of Prevention and Rehabilitation at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute. “This Atlas is important because it sets benchmarks and helps CCPN partners, including health units, hospitals, and our colleagues in the educational community to address areas of critical need.”

Key Findings of the Atlas

- **There continues to be a disparity between urban and rural populations:** Renfrew County, counties in Eastern Ontario (particularly Prescott and Russell), and Leeds, Grenville and Lanark are known “hot spots” for cardiovascular disease, with higher morbidity and mortality than rates for the city of Ottawa, the province, and Canada.
- Rates for most risk factors are lower than the national average among residents of Ottawa, but are generally higher than the national average among people in the same rural areas – particularly for diabetes, overweight and obesity, and smoking.
- Example – for the risk factor of smoking, only 9.4% of the population in Ottawa indicate they are daily smokers, compared with 15.6% in Canada, 20.7% in Eastern Ontario, 21.1% in Leeds, Grenville and Lanark, and 22.4% in Renfrew County.
- The Atlas reports a decrease in second-hand exposure to smoking in the region, which the CCPN attributes largely to education and public policies in recent years.
- Heart attacks, strokes, and other issues related to cardiovascular disease are a major cause of hospitalization in the region, accounting for 12% of all admissions. Cardiovascular disease

affects not only the lives of individuals and their families but also puts tremendous strain on the healthcare system.

- While the hospitalization and mortality rates from cardiovascular disease show a gradual decline overall in the Champlain Region, the CCPN projects a greater number of cases of heart disease and stroke in the future as a result of the aging population.

“It’s important to recognize that cardiovascular disease is the consequence of multiple factors that interact in a complex manner, and that community environments and lifestyles can make a vital difference to heart health,” explains Dr. Andreas Wielgosz, chair of CCPN’s Monitoring, Surveillance and Evaluation Expert Panel.

The CCPN represents a unique approach to disease prevention. It includes 15 health and community partners who work directly with the public in primary and specialty care, backed by significant expertise and leadership in the area of cardiovascular health.

Local Health Integration Network CEO Alex Munter notes that the Atlas helps the Champlain LHIN to shape priorities and build new programs. “Our staff participated in developing the Atlas,” says Mr. Munter. “We want to improve people’s access to health services across the region, and the Atlas has proven to be a solid local resource to assist us in this important work.”

While reports such as the *Atlas of Cardiovascular Health* provide understanding and strategic direction, the CCPN has initiated some high-profile programs. They include a smoking cessation system based in the region’s hospitals which to date has offered assistance with quitting to more than 21,000 hospitalized smokers, and the “Give Your Head a Shake” health communications campaign designed to assist Champlain residents to reduce their intake of sodium.

Back to School *and* Healthy Eating

Champlain area school boards are providing distinct leadership in another important area – nutrition. The CCPN led in the creation of the “Champlain Declaration” signed by all nine school boards and the four public health units in the Champlain region. The Declaration has focussed efforts on improving school nutrition environments – in the cafeteria, in the classroom, and in the choice of fundraising activities. This regional effort will be supported by the Ontario government’s new School Food and Beverage Policy, which will be mandatory across Ontario as of September 1, 2011.

The *Atlas of Cardiovascular Health* highlights statistics for the adult population, with some data for those aged 12 and older. “What’s critical is that unhealthy lifestyles begin at a young age,” says Dr. Wielgosz. “Many in our region are developing increasing levels of risk for heart disease and stroke. We want to reverse that trend.”

View the atlas and more information:

http://www.ccpnetwork.ca/en_media.php

Arrange an interview with Dr. Wielgosz or Alex Munter through:

Heather Blackmore
Communications Consultant
(613) 816-1285
blackmore@magma.ca

Laurie Dojeiji
Network Manager, Health Promotion CCPN
(613) 798-5555, ext. 18836
ldojeiji@ottawaheart.ca