

News Release

National MS Clinical Trial Receives Approval

Patients Recruitment to Start by November 1

For immediate release

Halifax (September 28, 2012) – The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health, today announced that a national MS clinical trial has received the necessary medical and ethical approvals required to proceed. The clinical trial is a collaborative initiative between the Government of Canada, the provinces and territories and the MS Society of Canada.

Dr. Anthony Traboulsee, Medical Director of the UBC Hospital MS Clinic, and his collaborators received ethics approvals from institutions in British Columbia and Québec to undertake a clinical trial for Chronic Cerebrospinal Venous Insufficiency (CCSVI) in persons with multiple sclerosis (MS).

The recruitment of patients will begin by November 1, 2012. Approximately 100 patients are expected to participate in the trial, to be conducted in British Columbia and Québec. Ethics approval is also being sought in Manitoba. Funding of the \$6 million study is a collaborative effort of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the MS Society of Canada and the provinces where the trial will take place.

“I’m pleased to congratulate the team of researchers who will be studying the safety and effectiveness of the CCSVI procedure,” said Minister Aglukkaq. “Our government is committed to working with the provinces and territories to advance research in MS with the goal of improving the health of Canadians who live with this debilitating disease.”

“The support that the Government of Canada and the MS Society of Canada has received from provincial and territorial partners is instrumental in the rollout of the clinical trial that will help ensure a shared national understanding of the procedure proposed by Dr. Paolo Zamboni,” said Dr. Alain Beaudet, President of CIHR.

“As we move through this important new phase of MS research, we look forward to Dr. Traboulsee and his team furthering the work of the Canadian research community and providing more insights about CCSVI for those living with MS,” said Yves Savoie, President and CEO of the MS Society of Canada.

“This pan Canadian controlled study will allow us to monitor MS patients over a two-year period and obtain scientific evidence on the safety and efficacy of the CCSVI procedure in the long term,” said Dr. Traboulsee, Medical Director of the UBC Hospital MS Clinic, President of the Canadian Network of MS Clinics, and Assistant Professor in the UBC Faculty of Medicine.

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) is the Government of Canada's health research investment agency. CIHR's mission is to create new scientific knowledge and to enable its translation into improved health, more effective health services and products, and a strengthened Canadian health care system. Composed of 13 Institutes, CIHR provides leadership and support to more than 14,100 health researchers and trainees across Canada.

The UBC Hospital MS Clinic is a world leader for innovative research using MRI to study and evaluate Multiple Sclerosis treatments as well as genetic epidemiology. It is led by a world renowned MS clinical research team comprised of specialists in pharmaceutical and interventional therapies, imaging, and genetics from Vancouver Coastal Health and UBC. The clinic, which cares for 80 – 90 percent of MS patients in British Columbia is home to the world's largest MS database of over 7500 patients, many of whom have been followed for over 25 years. The UBC Hospital MS Clinic is a member of the Canadian Network of MS Clinics, a national network of academic and community based clinics established for the advancement of patient services, education, and research in Multiple Sclerosis.

Further information:

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