GIROUL is home to the largest contingent of obesity researchers in Canada and is one of the most productive obesity research centres in the world. GIROUL researchers study the causes, complications, prevention, and treatment of obesity, the prevalence of which nearly doubled in Canada between 1978 and 2005, increasing from 13.8% to 24.3%. Visceral obesity is a risk factor for diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and certain types of cancer.

At GIROUL, the atmosphere of collaboration between basic and clinical researchers lays the groundwork for exceptional translational research.

CENTRE DESCRIPTION

GIROUL is a research group dedicated to advancing knowledge and training scientists in the field of obesity, particularly in the following areas:

- Complications and prevention of obesity
- Regulation of energy balance and tissue energy metabolism
- Medical and surgical aspects of obesity

Research themes are deliberately kept broad to include as many obesity researchers as possible. Each research area is overseen by an assistant director and includes regular and associate members from the following institutions:

- Québec Heart and Lung Institute Research Centre (CRIUCPO)
- CHU de Québec Research Center
- University Mental Health Institute Research Centre of Québec (CRULRG)
- Institute of Nutrition and Functional Foods (INAF)
- Université Laval
The creation of GIROUL has spurred the development of research on obesity and helped establish Université Laval as a world leader in the field. The university was ranked among the 25 leading obesity research establishments in a global study conducted by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) in 2002. The study sample comprised 7,483 groups ranked according to number of publications, total number of citations, and number of citations per publication. Université Laval was the only Canadian establishment in the top 25. Recently two CRIUCPQ researchers were ranked among the world’s most prolific authors on obesity research by Thomson Reuters (ScienceWatch), a scientific research productivity analytics group. Jean-Pierre Després and Angelo Tremblay placed 3rd and 4th, respectively, out of a total of 173,000 researchers who published obesity research findings over the past decade. Dr. Després signed or co-signed 192 publications during this period, making him the most prolific researcher in the field of cardiometabolic risk.

The remarkable scientific output of these researchers and their GIROUL colleagues has helped Université Laval maintain its leading role in obesity research. The university is now ranked 18th among more than 30,000 research establishments worldwide in terms of the number of publications on obesity, also according to Thomson Reuters.


KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The creation of GIROUL has spurred the development of research on obesity and helped establish Université Laval as a world leader in the field. The university was ranked among the 25 leading obesity research establishments in a global study conducted by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) in 2002. The study sample comprised 7,483 groups ranked according to number of publications, total number of citations, and number of citations per publication. Université Laval was the only Canadian establishment in the top 25. Recently two CRIUCPQ researchers were ranked among the world’s most prolific authors on obesity research by Thomson Reuters (ScienceWatch), a scientific research productivity analytics group. Jean-Pierre Després and Angelo Tremblay placed 3rd and 4th, respectively, out of a total of 173,000 researchers who published obesity research findings over the past decade. Dr. Després signed or co-signed 192 publications during this period, making him the most prolific researcher in the field of cardiometabolic risk.

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Students and postdoctoral fellows are drawn to GIROUL for the calibre of its world-class scientists and the resources they make available to budding researchers. Since 2002 the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) have provided funding for a $3.6 million obesity training program directed by Denis Richard. A dozen GIROUL researchers are associated with this initiative as co-principal investigators, and the scale of the funding clearly speaks to their expertise. To date, students under the program have been awarded some 50 master’s and Ph.D. scholarships and postdoctoral fellowships in ten different obesity-related areas. The program also led to the establishment of a unique six-credit graduate course covering all aspects of obesity. In addition, GIROUL is the hub for several major research chairs, including the International Chair on Cardiometabolic Risk, the Université Laval Research Chair in Obesity, the Pfizer-CIHR Research Chair on the Pathogenesis of Insulin Resistance and Cardiovascular Disease, and the Research Chair in Bariatric and Metabolic Surgery.

GIROUL students benefit from educational activities organized by the research chairs. For example, the Research Chair in Obesity hosts an annual symposium that brings together international experts to explore an obesity-related topic. And the International Chair on Cardiometabolic Risk organizes an international conference every year on the complications of visceral obesity.

Students and fellows supervised by GIROUL researchers work in important fields such as obesity-related social diseases—a high priority for funding agencies. Research on obesity, diabetes, and cardiometabolic health strengthens Québec’s position on the national and international scientific stage.