



## 22nd Annual Cardiovascular Conference at Lake Louise

Lake Louise, Alberta / March 26-30, 2006

### New CCS Heart Failure Guidelines Announced

**Lake Louise** - The Canadian Cardiovascular Society (CCS) announced the new 2006 CCS Heart Failure Consensus Recommendations at the 22nd Annual Cardiovascular Conference here at Lake Louise. The newly published 2006 version contains current recommendations on the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and ongoing management of heart disease.

As principal author of the new guidelines, Dr. Malcolm Arnold, Research Director, Division of Cardiology, London Health Sciences Centre, and Professor of Medicine, Physiology and Pharmacology, University of Western Ontario, announced the new recommendations during a two-hour, hands-on workshop session. "The CCS is making a long-term and ongoing commitment to the process of establishing, promoting and assessing the evidence-based recommendations for the treatment of heart failure," he told delegates.

Dr. Jonathan Howlett, Chair and Medical Director, Heart Function and Transplantation Program, Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre, and Associate Professor of Medicine, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, presented the new guidelines to the larger than expected audience. "These recommendations are designed to provide practical advice for specialists, family physicians, nurses, pharmacists and other healthcare professionals involved in heart failure care," Dr. Howlett stated.

Dr. Arnold described heart failure as "a complex syndrome" in which abnormal heart function results in, or increases the risk of, clinical symptoms, low cardiac output and/or pulmonary or systemic congestion. "Unfortunately," he noted, "heart failure is a common condition, the consequences of which are reduced quality of life, exercise tolerance and survival."

Dr. Arnold explained, "The goal of the recommendations is to translate best evidence-based therapies into clinical practice in order to make a measurable impact on the health of heart failure patients in Canada. What is new for our healthcare experts is that the Consensus recommendations represent a review of landmark cases and a comprehensive and compact set of recommendations and practical tips."

#### A Wide Range of Topics

The presentations cover a wide range of topics; the guidelines combine evidence-based medicine with specific recommendations. "Evidence-based combination drug therapy is recommended in most patients with heart failure," confirmed Dr. Howlett. More specifically, the guidelines

recommend patients with acute heart failure be contacted within two hours.

Dr. Peter Liu, Heart and Stroke/Polo Chair, Professor of Medicine and Physiology, Toronto General Hospital, Ontario, discussed the often hidden diagnosis of diastolic heart failure, describing it as a condition that is "under-recognized in the community" due to a lack of classic symptoms, such as the absence of left ventricular dilation.

"We have a specific section on the care of the elderly and how psychosocial issues should be evaluated," Dr. Howlett indicated.

"Knowledge translation is about closing the gap between 'what we know' and 'what we do' with respect to patient care," stated John Parker, MN, Director, CCS Knowledge Translation. "It requires multidisciplinary involvement across many memberships and the CCS is proud to be collaborating with many national cardiovascular organizations in this long-term initiative."

"The sessions had at least four major themes," Dr. Howlett elaborated. "Those themes include the importance of the multidisciplinary approach for heart failure patients; the need for the role of supportive care when necessary; the use of new therapies, including medical devices; and many others."

Presentations held during the hands-on workshop covered all of these major themes in more detail.

Dr. Nadia Giannetti, Medical Director, Heart Function Centre, and Assistant Professor of Medicine, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, addressed the problems surrounding the very diagnosis of heart failure itself, especially the ability to diagnose heart failure in the presence of comorbidities.

Dr. Debra Isaac, Director, Cardiac Transplant Program, Foothills Medical Centre, Calgary, Alberta, and Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine, University of Calgary, discussed the changing patterns of care for heart failure patients from maintenance therapy to supportive care.

"Palliative treatment for end-stage heart failure patients must include management for pain, severe dyspnea, severe congestion, cough and anxiety," Dr. Isaac enumerated.

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Dr. Simon Jackson, Program Director, Adult Cardiology, and Assistant Professor of Medicine, Division of Cardiology, Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre, conducted a lively and engaging “game-show” session around the new consensus recommendations.

“We really want people to interact and communicate, using active encouragement and active reinforcement,” he declared. “We are partners together, each specialty bringing an understanding of the patient.”

### **Get Involved, Know the Latest**

All healthcare specialties are invited to participate in this innovative and interactive workshop. During this two-hour, hands-on session, your job will be to develop strategies for optimal implementation of the 2006 CCS Heart Failure Consensus Recommendations.

We invite you to attend the next CCS 2006, which is part of an ongoing series of presentations and

opportunities for you to learn, interact, and have your questions answered regarding the 2006 consensus guidelines. Your work will contribute directly to the establishment of benchmarks for the care of your patients.

By recommending that patient and caregiver education should be tailored and repeated and that it should reflect the best use of local resources, the CCS is taking a leadership role in Canada and around the world.

“We had a great turnout,” Mr. Parker enthused. “Almost 200 cardiovascular professionals in attendance, and we were expecting only 50 people.” This high degree of interest generated lively discussion and participation among the attendees.

The CCS is coming to your community to deliver a series of National Heart Failure workshops. In addressing delegates, Dr. Arnold called upon them to stay involved, reminding them that “the success of this process depends upon your involvement.” □

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Web site:

**<http://hfcc.ccs.ca>**

Upcoming Meeting:

**9th Annual Toronto International Heart Failure Summit**

Toronto, Ontario / June 14-16, 2006

(<http://www.torontohfsummit.com/home/home.php>)

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