

MEDIA RELEASE

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Hope for Treatment of Huntington Disease (HD) in Humans **Mice Cured of HD in British Columbia Lab**

(Kitchener, ON) Today, researchers at the Child and Family Research Institute's Centre for Molecular Medicine and Therapeutics (CMMT), British Columbia, Canada provided groundbreaking evidence of a cure for Huntington disease (HD) in a mouse, offering hope that the disease can be cured in humans.

"It represents a major research milestone and moves us closer to finding effective treatment for this disorder" says Don Lamont, CEO & Executive Director of the Huntington Society of Canada (HSC) – Canada's only organization focussed on research, education and support in the HD field.

"Our families live on a 'tightrope' waiting for an effective treatment or a cure for HD" says Lamont. "The discovery provides hope for the Huntington community – most of all, hope that their children will not have to suffer the devastation of this inherited disease." Huntington disease (HD) is a progressive hereditary brain disorder with devastating effects on both mind and body, resulting in death.

Published today in Cell Journal, Dr. Michael Hayden and colleagues demonstrated that by preventing the cleavage of the mutant huntingtin protein responsible for Huntington disease in a mouse model, the degenerative symptoms underlying the illness do not appear and the mouse displays normal brain function. **This is the first time in the world that a cure for HD in mice has been successfully achieved.**

"Ten years ago, we discovered that huntingtin is cleaved by 'molecular scissors' which led to the hypothesis that cleavage of huntingtin may play a key role in causing Huntington disease", said Dr. Michael Hayden, Director and Senior Scientist at the University of British Columbia's Centre for Molecular Medicine and Therapeutics

HSC is honoured to have a long-term association with Dr. Hayden. Dr. Hayden has numerous scientific achievements in HD, including the establishment of CMMT, which conducts one of the most comprehensive HD research programs in Canada. We applaud Dr. Hayden's lifelong and relentless search for a cure and this signal breakthrough in creating "A World Free From Huntington's". This momentous discovery adds another milestone of success in the history of Huntington's research in Canada. It is a testament to the value of philanthropic investments in the worldwide search for a cure for HD.

While families wait for an effective treatment or cure, philanthropic giving also enables the Huntington Society of Canada to strengthen and support generations of families as they manage the progressive losses with each stage of the disease.

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