

CCHE Seminar Series

Guelph Family Health Study: Assessing the impact and cost-effectiveness of a family-based obesity prevention intervention



Professor David Ma
University of Guelph

Date: Friday, February 12th, 2016

Time: 10 AM – 12 PM

Location: Health Sciences Building
Room 100 (first floor)

Summary: The Guelph Family Health Study is a bold research endeavour designed to tackle the pressing challenges of obesity and related chronic diseases. The overarching goal of the study is to create a family cohort that can be followed for many years. Our scientific objectives are to: 1) identify early life factors associated with later obesity and chronic disease, and 2) test family-based strategies to support healthful behaviours early in life. In this presentation, we will describe the Guelph Family Health Study, and present findings from our year-long pilot study with 44 families which included 79 parents and 55 children.

Dr. Ma obtained his PhD in Medical Sciences in 2001 at the University of Alberta conducting research on the anticancer properties of ruminant fats in breast cancer. He then moved to Texas A&M University where he did postdoctoral research investigating the role of omega-3 fatty acids and folate in colon cancer. He returned to Canada where he joined the Department of Nutritional Sciences at the University of Toronto as an Assistant Professor in 2004. Then, in 2007 joined the faculty in the Department of Human Health and Nutritional Sciences at the University of Guelph where he is currently an Associate Professor and Director of the Health for Life Initiative. He is also the Vice President Research for the Canadian Nutrition Society playing an active role in many committees and conference planning. Dr. Ma's research encompasses investigations to better understand the role of fats in human health and disease. As the Director of the Health for Life Initiative, he is leading the Guelph Family Health Study (GFHS), a longitudinal cohort study of families with young children. The goal of the GFHS is to develop tools and new approaches to support healthy habits and behaviours that will have lasting benefits for the prevention of chronic disease. Responsibilities include stakeholder engagement, fundraising, responding to media and leading a research team including 7 faculty, 1 study coordinator and 22 trainees.