

# TEAM LED BY U OF M RESEARCHER GIVEN \$300K TO STUDY H1N1

ERIC SENIUK

Researchers at the U of M have received \$300,000 in research funding from the federal government to study the H1N1 flu virus for the next two years.

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) one of Canada's government agencies that allocates medical research funding, has given Dr. Satyendra Sharma and his research team \$300,000.

Dr. Sharma is head of respiratory in the university's department of internal medicine. The purpose of the study is to determine why most individuals infected with H1N1 receive mild symptoms, while others develop severe respiratory illness (SRI), causing hospitalization.

"This study is going to be a collaborative effort, requiring the support of 15 individuals representing nine institutions nationwide," said Sharma. "We hope that the five modules we will be working on for the next two years will shed light on this virus."

The five modules each play a critical role in the overall objectives of the study. In Modules 1, 2 and 3, Sharma and his team will study H1N1 at the immune system level. In Module 4, the researchers will investigate whether genetic factors cause some individuals infected with the virus to develop severe respiratory illness more easily than others. In the fifth and final module, Sharma and

his colleagues will examine the long-term outcomes of patients surviving severe respiratory illness.

Much of the specific research will be done in a variety of facilities across the country. "A lot of the lab work will be conducted at the Cadham Provincial Laboratory, and, to a lesser extent, in

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— LEONA AGLUKKAK

the National Microbiology Lab here in Winnipeg," explained Sharma.

"We will have to conduct parts of our study in hospitals, visiting patients that have developed severe respiratory illness from the virus. In studying patients with only minor symptoms, we will require volunteers with H1N1 to step forward and help us."

The award of \$300,000 for Dr. Sharma's study was just one of many funding announcements made by Health Minister Leona Aglukkak on her trip to Winnipeg. The federal government is giving out \$2.4 million

dollars in total, to five separate projects across the country researching various aspects of H1N1.

"Canada is a global leader in H1N1 flu virus research, including research with our international partners on a safe and effective H1N1 vaccine," said Aglukkak in a press release.

"The scientific research we are funding today will help ensure that our knowledge, approach and planning remain among the best in the world."

The funding announcement has been a source of excitement amongst many on campus. "It's great that research into H1N1 will be conducted by some of the brightest minds here at the U of M," said Mitch Ross, a first-year nursing student at the University of Manitoba. "I think it's excellent that the U of M will be recognized globally for its research into the virus. This shows that there are opportunities for meaningful research to take place right here in Manitoba."

Dr. Sharma's team includes researchers from the Universities of British Columbia, Western Ontario, Toronto, McMaster and Dalhousie.

Additionally, members of the Cadham Provincial Laboratory, the Hospital for Sick Children, the Institute for Bio-diagnostics, the National Research Council, the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion are involved.

# U OF W GETS A NEW GREEN FLEET THANKS TO ENERGY CONSERVATION DEVICE

*U of W gets gizmo to help them go green*

PATRICK GRATTON, STAFF

The Center for Sustainable Transportation (CST) at the University of Winnipeg is upgrading the U of W's transportation services with the addition of OttoView devices.

CST is a non-profit organization that is helping to craft transportation that is benefiting society and the environment, while enhancing mobility. OttoView is a hand-held electronic device installed in vehicles that monitors a car's performance.

The device reads and filters information regarding the vehicle's emissions. The device calculates the release of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere, as well as calculating the fuelling cost and emissions output. In return, the device will deliver a diagnostic report on the vehicle's emissions to its user.

"We connect it to the vehicle's diagnostic port," explains Frank Franczyk, president of Persentech Inc., OttoView's manufacturer.

"We basically ask questions about the fuel, the temperature and the rotations per minute. We ask all of these questions and we bring back all the information for the sensors that provide the information [to the driver]," Franczyk said.

OttoView is the successor of OttoLink, a similar device developed by Persentech. Early research on the OttoView device was conducted at the University of Manitoba. The company worked with Dr. Eric Bibeau, an assistant professor in the department of engineering.

The major difference between OttoLink and OttoView is the increased amount of information that OttoView devices can receive.

"The main attempt is to raise awareness and to first of all understand what is happening with these various vehicles. Before people didn't care, now people are thinking more about it. [...] If you think of the number of vehicles that are on the road you can imagine the impact if you raise awareness" said Franczyk.

"If you teach them about this and also reinforce it by having something inside the vehicle that would give them that immediate feedback, there are benefits associated with that to the environment," explained Franczyk.

"We want to reduce greenhouse gas emissions," adds Terry Zdan, CST research director.

While using the devices, the driver is able to see where they can improve when it comes to gas consumption, said Zdan. The hope is to reduce fossil fuel consumption.

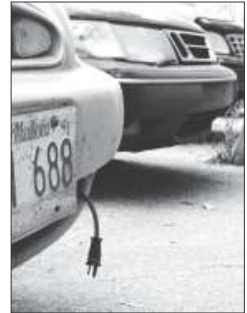


Photo by Carly Moore

He continued, "The other thing we would want to [know] is if we want to change the vehicle, what do we replace it with, and if there is a better vehicle out there that provides a better fuel economy for conventional vehicles."

CST has been functioning with the help of the Center for Applied Training in Sustainable Infrastructure (CARSI) at Red River College. Zdan highlights CARSI's innovative facilities.

According to Zdan, CARSI is breaking ground in the research of fully understanding the capacities of the technology. The center is researching the different infrastructures that best help Winnipeg's climate.

"Working with Red River College in this area is very important because it shows how Manitoba as a province has this capability to compete in the worldwide market that develop these innovative technologies" explains Zdan.

"We are establishing ATEC (Advanced Transportation and Energy Center) and its focus is more on vehicle technology using alternative and renewable fuels. We're working on increasing the fuel efficiency of fleets," said Ray Roemsen, CARSI's director of applied research and commercialization.

The OttoView display is being programmed inside security vehicles, one of the many functions of the SafeWalk program. The program's goal is to keep the U of W campus safe for students who are on campus during the evening hours. The statistics provided by OttoView are meant to be analyzed in March of 2010 and to be applied practically the following year.



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