



# CCORT PULSE

## CCORT OBJECTIVES:

- Improve quality of AMI & CHF care in Canada
- Improve invasive cardiac procedure outcomes in Canada
- Stimulate multidisciplinary and inter-provincial collaborative cardiovascular outcomes research
- Train the next generation of Canadian cardiovascular outcome researchers

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Funding provided by:



Volume 1, Issue 1

April 2002

## First Edition of the CCORT Pulse

We are pleased to introduce the first edition of the CCORT Pulse! The goal of this newsletter is to provide an up-to-date source of information to key stakeholders and researchers about the latest CCORT activities, publications and events. You may register to automatically receive this newsletter on the CCORT

website: [www.ccort.ca](http://www.ccort.ca).

Please send us any ideas for contribution/content.

## CCORT/CCS Quality Indicators for AMI/CHF Care

In the summer of 2001, two expert panels, comprised of health care professionals from a variety of specialties across Canada, were convened to develop quality indicators for Acute Myocardial Infarction (AMI) and Chronic Heart Failure (CHF) in Canada. While other countries have developed quality indicators for cardiovascular disease, the CCORT-CCS panels were the first to establish unique sets of Canadian quality indicators for CHF and AMI care.

also be made available on the CCORT website later in 2002. Lead authors Chau Tran and Doug Lee suggest that these indicators will contribute to the growing research initiatives in the area to measure and improve the quality of care to cardiovascular disease patients.

Using clinical chart abstracted or administrative data, the structure, processes and outcomes of care can be assessed at regional, provincial and national levels. These indicators can then be tailored by clinicians to meet individual user needs.

These indicators will be published in the Canadian Journal of Cardiology and will



*Measuring and improving the quality of Cardiovascular Care in Canada...*





## CCORT Researcher Profile... Dr. Louise Pilote

Dr. Louise Pilote earned a medical degree from McGill University in 1985, followed by a residency in Internal Medicine at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal. In 1988 she moved to Boston where she earned a Master of Public Health at Harvard. After her MPH, she held four post-doctoral fellowships at Stanford University, followed by a fellowship in Cleveland, Ohio. In 1997, she graduated from the University of California at

Berkeley with a PhD in Epidemiology. She has held a Research Scholarship from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada since 1997 and also received a Medical Research Council career award.

Currently, in addition to her involvement with CCORT, Louise is Principal Investigator on three separate CIHR operating grants awarded in January 2002. She is a Staff Physician in Internal Medicine and

Medical Scientist in Clinical Epidemiology at the Montreal General Hospital. She is also an Associate Professor of Medicine at McGill University.

In addition to her thriving career, Louise is a mother of 3 girls, Sarah Leah, Ariella and Elisheva (ages 5, 3 and 2). These days Louise says her "hobbies include not much else but taking care of these girls!" In addition to spending time with her daughters,

Louise also tries to fit exercise into her busy schedule.



**Dr. Louise Pilote**

## Interpretation of Clinical Report Cards

Up until now, there has been little attention placed on understanding how data presented in report cards will be interpreted. A CCORT study that will examine this issue is being led by Dr. Jan Hux and colleagues. The goal of this study is to determine how the format or presentation of data (framing effects)

affects interpretations by end users.

In October 2001, a survey was sent to physicians, policy-makers and hospital administrators asking them to respond to AMI and CHF indicators presented in various ways. For example, data for an indicator such as ACE inhibitor use by

CHF patients at discharge was presented in several ways, such as bar graphs, survival curves, and tables. Indicators were "framed", either positively or negatively, to judge how this may also affect a reader's interpretation of the data.

The response rate to this survey was 59%. The study team is

currently in the process of analyzing the data. Outcomes from this study will help guide the future presentation of results from other CCORT projects.



## Cardiovascular Atlas Project Update

The Canadian Cardiovascular Atlas project has kicked into full gear. Susan Brien and Courtney Kennedy joined the Atlas project as Research Coordinators this winter and have been busy getting the project up and running. The chapter topics and lead authors have been

assigned, and first drafts of the chapter outlines were presented and discussed at the first major Atlas Planning Meeting held March 1, 2002 at ICES in Toronto. Authors for the Atlas Chapters include cardiovascular outcomes researchers from across the country, and a

strong partnership has been formed with researchers in the Division of Health at Statistics Canada. Since March, chapter authors have been busy revising their outlines and running preliminary analyses, which will be presented during the Atlas Planning component of the

upcoming annual CCORT meeting April 29-30 in Toronto.



## CCORT Research Fellow Profile... Dr. Peter Faris

Dr. Peter Faris is a CCORT Postdoctoral Fellow based at the University of Calgary where he is a member of the APPROACH team. Peter received his PhD in Biostatistics from the University of Calgary in 1999. His dissertation investigated methods of performing risk adjustment with incomplete data.

In addition to his own research as a CCORT Fellow, Peter has

an important role in developing the maps for the CCORT National Cardiac Atlas.

Some of his past professional activities include working as a Statistical Consultant for the Centre of Advancement of Health at the Calgary Foothills Hospital and acting as a reviewer for several organizations including the Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation, and

the Foothills Hospital Con-joint Scientific Review Com-mittee of the Clinical Trials Section.

When he is not working, Peter makes good use of his proximity to the Rockies, enjoying hiking and skiing. He is also heavily involved in music, and in addition to playing guitar and song-writing, he has a recording

Studio set up in his home (his 2 cats sing back-up).



Dr. Peter Faris

## Physician Focus Group Update (and Anecdotes from a Small Town!)

CCORT Project 5, which explores physicians' perceptions of report cards, is well underway. To date, four focus groups have been conducted in three Nova Scotia communities; two in a community with a tertiary care center, one with a secondary care center, and one with a primary care center. Participants have been a combination of cardiologists, emergency department physicians, and family physicians. Each focus group has lasted two and a half hours, with four to eight participants in attendance. Generally speaking,

participants have openly shared their attitudes and opinions of 'report cards', and reactions have been both positive and constructive.

Kelly Nicol, Research Coordinator for the project reports: "One of the difficulties we have encountered is recruiting physicians to participate. In addition to financial compensation as an incentive to attend, we provide a meal for all of the participants. Unexpectedly, dealing with local caterers has helped us to understand the flavor (both literally

and figuratively) of the communities that we're researching. For example, the community chosen as having a primary care center was a rural fishing village. Here, the local caterer suggested a seafood casserole. I told her that I did not think it would be appropriate as shellfish was a common allergy. She inquired about the event that I was planning, to which I responded it was a research session for local physicians (no names were mentioned). She replied that she would get

back to me. The next day she called me back, saying that she had talked to everyone that would be attending, and none of them were allergic to shellfish! The 'close knit' community feel was also evident in this community's transcript."

Three focus groups are planned for Ontario in parallel communities during the month of May.

## Lighter notes... "Fuzzy Logic"

The Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.

On the other hand, the French eat a lot of fat and also suffer fewer heart attacks than

the British or Americans.

The Japanese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.

The Italians drink excessive

amounts of red wine and also suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.

Conclusion: Eat & drink what you like. It's speaking English that kills you.





## CCORT Annual Meeting - April 29/30, 2002

The Second Annual CCORT meeting will be held at the Vaughan Estate (Sunnybrook Campus) in Toronto on April 29-30. The focus of Day 1 is on project updates from CCORT researchers. The CCORT student paper competition awards will be given out and the winners will present their work. A reception will be served in the Conservatory of the McLean Estate at the end the first day. Day 2 will begin with a presentation on the Dartmouth Cardiovascular Atlas by our CCORT Guest Speaker, Dr. David Wennberg from Dartmouth Medical School (see profile below). The remainder of the day will focus on the CCORT Cardiac Atlas and chapter authors will present preliminary data analyses.

### *Guest Speaker: CCORT Annual Meeting... Dr. David Wennberg*

Day 2 of the CCORT Annual meeting will be kicked-off with an Invited Lecture by David Wennberg MD, MPH, from Dartmouth Medical School. Dr. Wennberg will be speaking on the "Dartmouth Cardiovascular Atlas."

Dr. Wennberg is the President and Chief Operating Officer of Health Dialog Data Services (HDDS). He is also Director of the Center for Outcomes

Research & Evaluation at the Maine Medical Center and Senior Research Associate at the Maine Medical Assessment Foundation. He graduated from McGill University Faculty of Medicine in 1987 and his post graduate medical education was in internal medicine at the Maine Medical Center. Following his residency, he was a fellow in general internal

medicine at the Harvard Combined program and received a MPH from the Harvard School of Public Health. At the HDDS he focuses on identification and stratification of high-risk patients as well evaluation of interventions. His major research interest is the quality of care for cardiovascular services.



**Dr. David Wennberg**



### New CCORT Website!

A new web-programmer has been hired to update the CCORT website. Over the next few months, Nemir Alazzawi will be working on several changes to our site including more interactive features that will be useful to all visitors to the site. Please stay tuned!

Check us out online at: [www.ccort.ca](http://www.ccort.ca)

**Good-bye...** Virginia Flintoft, who has been the lead coordinator on the CCORT EFFECT clinical trial and a valuable member of ICES since its beginning, will be leaving us in April. Her expertise and camaraderie will be missed and we wish her all the best in future endeavours.

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