



CAMOSCOPE

Issue no. 3 - December 1998

SEASON'S GREETINGS

*The CaMos Team wishes you a Happy Holiday Season
and Best Wishes for the New Year*

CaMos fights for research dollar\$!

Since it began in 1995, CaMos has had the generous support of both private and public sponsors. Its total budget is \$9.5 million. While industrial sponsors (Eli Lilly Canada, Merck-Frosst Canada, Procter & Gamble, the Dairy Farmers of Canada) provided considerable financial support, the project could not proceed without funding from the federal government. In 1998, as part of the government's austerity program the responsibility for funding all medical/biological research was transferred to the Medical Research Council (MRC). The National Health Research and Development Program which funded CaMos from its inception, could not do so beyond March 31, 1998. Without government funds CaMos would have to be terminated.

CaMos, together with the Osteoporosis Society of Canada (OSC) and some of its industrial sponsors, the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario and Seniors' organizations campaigned to raise support in Ottawa. Meetings with members of Parliament

alerted the government to the consequences of stopping CaMos prematurely.

Most important in changing the tide in Ottawa was the response of CaMos participants and OSC donors, who mounted an effective postcard and letter campaign. Thousands of letters of concern were sent to the Federal Government. Fortunately our plight received a sympathetic ear in Ottawa

and in April, CaMos received funding to continue to mid-August. In July, CaMos was awarded a 5-year MRC grant that will help us to complete the study. Funding is still short of our needs but we are confident that we will obtain what is needed to complete the study.

Thank you for your support. We hope we can count on all of you to help see the study through to a successful completion.

Study Update

We are delighted that the vast majority of you are still very much committed to the study. The 9 centres completed the year 1 follow-up at the end of Sept 1998. The overwhelming majority of you (98.7%) returned the year one questionnaire. We thank you and encourage all of you to continue your involvement in the study for the entire five years.

The year 2 follow-up has been ongoing since summer of 1997. This follow-up involves answering a mailed one page questionnaire and

nutrition questionnaire. The collected data once entered into a database are then analysed. Several working groups have been analyzing the data for publication of CaMos findings. This process will be ongoing until the end of the study in the year 2002.

As of January 1999, the 9 centres across the country will begin the 3 year follow-up. During this phase, an interview and Bone Mineral Density measurement will be done on women and men aged 40-60 years at the time they entered the study.

Regional News

Calgary started a substudy, the "25 Hydroxy Vitamin D Study" in the fall 1998. A randomized selection of 300 CaMos participants from the Calgary area will be asked to take part in this very important study.

The Toronto site will soon be a vital part of a new Osteoporosis Centre at St. Michael's Hospital.

We wish the best to Pat Krutzen, former coordinator, on her retirement and welcome Jola Kedra to the

Saskatoon Site.

We deeply regret the death of Dr. Tom Mackenzie, CaMos co-investigator and director of our data entry site in Kingston. He was part of the group originally involved in the writing of the CaMos research protocol. The data entry centre has been moved to Montreal and will be supervised by Dr. L. Joseph and Ms. S. Poliquin. Thank you to the Kingston staff for their hard work and dedication over the past 4 years.

Web Site

Visit CaMos's Web Site at:

<http://www.camos.org>

for more information. Your suggestions are most welcome.

Your Regional Centre

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The Menopause and the Andropause: Sex Hormones and Osteoporosis

For women, menopause is a well recognized natural experience, usually occurring between the ages of 46 and 56 (average age 52 years). At that time, the ovaries cease to function, and no longer produce estrogen, the hormone that regulates female sex functions, but also plays an important role in maintaining the amount of bone as the skeleton ages. With aging, men and women lose bone, but low estrogen levels accelerate bone loss at the time of menopause. On average, a woman will lose 25% of her bone within the first 12 years after menopause. In menopausal women, estrogen can be provided pharmacologically through pills

or patches. This slows down the loss of bone, and prevents age-related fractures. Much laboratory research is currently being done to understand how estrogen exerts its powerful effects on bone, and CaMos will provide much information about the effects of menopause and estrogen in the causation of osteoporosis, particularly during years of active hormonal changes. Men also experience hormonal changes with age, but not as dramatically as women.

The male hormone, testosterone, is important to maintain bone in men, but the loss of male sex hormone is

much more gradual. In most men, this modest decline does not cause any problems. However, in some men the loss of testosterone may be greater, and lead to problems with sexual function and osteoporosis. The medical term for this change is "andropause". There is increasing interest among doctors in administering testosterone to older males with low testosterone levels. In older men, the most common identifiable cause of osteoporosis is a low testosterone level. However, males also have small amounts of estrogen, and recent studies have shown that estrogen (produced in the body from testosterone) also makes an important contribution to bone strength in men. This is a very active area for current research. CaMos is the largest population-based study of male bone health ever undertaken.

Osteoporosis Studied on Space Shuttle

It has long been known that due to weightlessness in space, astronauts lose bone similar to individuals suffering from osteoporosis. Three Canadian experiments were selected to explore bone loss and rebuilding on the NASA space shuttle launched on October 29. The experiments used the space environment to explore the processes of osteoporosis and to evaluate a treat-

ment for the disease. The experiments mark a unique collaboration between the Canadian Space Agency, several universities and two private sector companies.

(Info provided by the OSC)

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