

# camoscope

## CaMos

Canadian Multicentre Osteoporosis Study  
Étude Canadienne multicentrique sur l'ostéoporose

*Best Wishes for the New Year  
from the CaMos Team!*

ISSUE NO. 7 JANUARY 2003

## Editorial

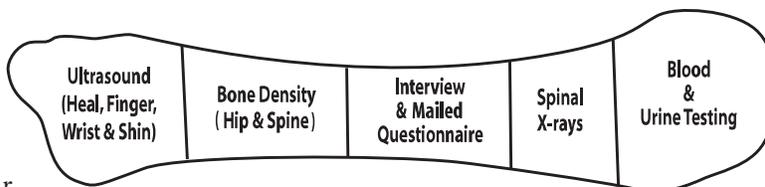
— DR ALAN TENENHOUSE, PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR, MONTREAL



The first five years of CaMos have been enormously gratifying, scientifically rewarding, and vital to the development of a strategy for eliminating fracture as a serious threat of old age. Participant feedback across the country has been very positive with the majority willing to continue in the study for another five years. Some have moved

away from the centre that recruited them into the study and yet continue to participate: a Vancouver participant who now lives in Denmark had her five-year follow-up while visiting Toronto.

The study has been recognized internationally as one of the best ever done in osteoporosis epidemiology in terms of design and execution. CaMos data is being used by a number of investigators to answer important questions related to osteoporosis and fractures, including a World Health Organization (WHO) sponsored international effort to design a universal “risk assessment” tool.



## What Have We Done So Far?

- ◆ Information has been gathered from 9,423 men and women across Canada, INCLUDING YOU!
- ◆ Ages range from 25 to 103.
- ◆ Recruitment started in 1995 and the 5 year follow-up was completed at the end of 2002.

*Thank you for your participation. It has been a great privilege to work with you all.*

## What Next?

- ◆ Continue to analyze the information collected
- ◆ Develop a program that will prevent osteoporosis and fractures
- ◆ Collect data for 5 more years to:
  - Test the prevention program
  - Recommend implementation of the program nationwide

The second phase of CaMos will include the study of a series of substances found in blood and urine called “bone markers”. These are used as indicators of bone health. It is

believed that the concentration of these compounds can help in the early detection of those at increased risk to develop osteoporosis or to fracture. CaMos provides

a unique opportunity to test whether this is true.

The CaMos scientific team is eager to begin the next phase. Our corporate sponsors, Merck Frosst Canada,

► Eli Lilly Canada, The Alliance for Bone Health (Procter & Gamble Pharmaceuticals, Aventis Pharma), and Novartis Canada, have pledged continued support. We will soon be asking the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (the Canadian Government) to continue their support for at least another five years. We believe the study will be successfully completed and that the final result will be a reduction of fracture risk and an increased quality of life for all Canadian seniors. ♦

## Vitamin D Insufficiency in a Population of Healthy Western Canadians

—DIANA RUCKER, CALGARY

Canadians living in northern latitudes may be at an increased risk of vitamin D insufficiency and its associated risk of osteoporotic fractures. Vitamin D helps the body absorb calcium, which strengthens bones. People can obtain vitamin D in their diet or synthesize it in the skin after exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays. Normally, 10-15 minutes of daily exposure of the hand and face to the sun would be sufficient to produce adequate amounts of vitamin D. However, previous research has shown that between late October and March, sunlight is not enough for most Canadians. The sun comes in at more of an angle and the atmosphere filters out most of the ultraviolet B rays that you need for vitamin D synthesis. It is to be noted that very few foods naturally contain vitamin D.

At the University of Calgary, Dr. Hanley and his research team followed 188 healthy Calgary CaMos participants

between ages 27 and 89 for one year, sampling their blood every three months to measure any fluctuations of Vitamin D and other related hormone markers. All participants were asked to take no more than 200 IU (international units) of vitamin D (the amount commonly found in a multivitamin preparation) during the study.

The research team found that vitamin D levels were lower in the fall and winter when compared to the spring and summer months. Lower levels of vitamin D were also associated with increasing age and an increase in body mass index. They also found that at least one third of otherwise healthy Calgary adults were below the acceptable value for vitamin D levels at one point during the year. However, if another, more recently proposed acceptable value was used, virtually the whole study population (97%) was deemed as having vitamin D insufficiency.

Calgary is one of the sunniest places in Canada and is situated at a higher altitude than many other Canadian cities. Both of these factors normally help with skin vitamin D synthesis. If Calgaryans have low levels of vitamin D, it is likely to be a problem in other parts of Canada. ♦

### REFERENCE

D. Rucker, J. Allan, G. Fick, D. Hanley.

CMAJ 2002;166(12) 1517-1524.

*The electronic version of the complete article may be accessed by going to the CaMos Web site at [www.camos.org](http://www.camos.org), under CaMos publications, double click on the title "Vitamin D insufficiency in a population of healthy western Canadians".*

## Regional News

Appreciation events funded outside of CaMos have taken place in Hamilton, Toronto and Saskatoon. Thank you to the industry sponsors for helping to make these events possible.

## Editorial Team

Suzette Poliquin, Barbara Gardner-Bray, Barbara Matthews and Suzanne Godmaire.

## We Need Your Help!

In the next issue of the newsletter we will be introducing a question and answer column for CaMos participants. If you have questions you would like answered in upcoming issues, please send them to us either by mail (CaMos, 1650 Cedar Ave. Room D13-157, Montreal, Quebec, H3G 1A4) or by e-mail to: [info@camos.org](mailto:info@camos.org)

## Behind the Scenes

— **SUZETTE POLIQUIN**, NATIONAL COORDINATOR, MONTREAL

This is a new column to introduce the people behind the scenes at CaMos. Do you ever wonder where your annual questionnaire goes? When it leaves your home centre, it leaves your name behind and just uses the number that you were assigned at the beginning of the study. It is sent to Montreal where the national coordinating centre is located. Along with the other 9,000 questionnaires, it begins the process of being turned into research data.

Meet the team that is directed by Dr. Alan Tenenhouse, the study's principal investigator.

Linda Rago, part time clerical assistant, receives all CaMos questionnaires from the regional centres. The contents of the packages are verified and the tracking database is updated. The questionnaires are passed on for data entry and eventually filed in binders in the archives room.

Data collected from the questionnaires answered by you, the CaMos participants, are captured electronically. Ginette Lafrance the data entry specialist, diligently enters the data from paper copies to a computer software program custom designed for our study and reports the discrepancies. Ginette has been working with the study since May 1999.

Suzanne Godmaire is the project's research assistant. She has been work-

ing with CaMos since 1995. She is responsible for formatting all research forms, monitoring the regional centre's progress with respect to follow-ups, overseeing the data entry program development and supervising the data entry process. She assists the national coordinator with various coordinating tasks.

Suzette Poliquin is the national coordinator. She has been working with CaMos since the beginning in 1994 and manages the overall study. Her responsibilities include the development of the CaMos questionnaires, management of the study's budget and production of the yearly newsletter "The CaMoscope", planning and organizing the annual CaMos meeting where the researchers come together to discuss the results and plan the publications. She also coordinates communications between the regional centres and the national coordinating office. ♦



From Left to Right: Linda Rago, Suzette Poliquin, Suzanne Godmaire and Ginette Lafrance.

### CaMos Web Site

[www.camos.org](http://www.camos.org)

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