MMCRI awarded $2.1M by the National Institutes of Health

The Maine Medical Center Research Institute (MMCRI) has been awarded a four-year, $2.1 million grant from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) of the National Institutes of Health. The funding will support the study of a gene known as Collagen Triple Helix Repeat Containing 1 (CTHRC1), which may play a significant role in heart health, particularly after a heart attack.

Previous studies have suggested that a protein derived from CTHRC1, a gene discovered in the MMCRI lab of Principal Investigator Volkhard Lindner, M.D., Ph.D., helps cells use nutrients more efficiently. Dr. Lindner and fellow Principal Investigator Sergey Ryzhov, M.D., Ph.D., believe the gene could help bodies minimize damage from a heart attack by allowing the heart to survive on fewer nutrients while it’s healing. People with high levels of CTHRC1 in their cardiovascular system have been found to have far higher survival rates after cardiac arrest.

“This study will test whether CTHRC1 provides cardiovascular protection after a heart attack and perhaps prevent heart failure,” Dr. Lindner said. “The research could lead to new therapeutic approaches to improving heart health.”

Currently, about 30 percent of healthy adults have detectible levels of CTHRC1 circulating in their blood. Champion athletes have the highest levels of the gene, lending more credence to the theory that the gene plays a role in helping cells repair efficiently.

Ice and Snow - Take it Slow

As the winter months continue to bring snow and ice, please remember to take safety precautions during inclement weather. The annual Storm Prep issue of What’s Happening, which was distributed in November, outlines tips and policies surrounding snow storms. The Storm Prep issue can be obtained by contacting the MMC Communications and Public Affairs team at mmcnews@mmc.org.

Maine Medical Center is always open, and we are very appreciative of all colleagues who come to work to care for patients during snow storms.

Thank you and stay safe!
Healthy volunteers are needed to participate in an ongoing study being conducted by the Maine Medical Center Research Institute (MMCRI) in partnership with Beth Israel Deaconess. The Daily Life Study will investigate how emotions, thoughts and experiences change over time for young adults.

The study is seeking healthy young adults aged 15 - 25 to participate. Participants will be asked to download an app that will send six short surveys throughout the day over the course of three weeks. Participants can earn up to $290 for their time.

For more information contact Kate Powers at kpowers@mmc.org.

"At its core, being curious about our patients and our practice of medicine may drive us to learn more," Dr. Bing-You said. “Such learning can improve clinical competence, and better yet, expertise. My hope is that the Journal of Maine Medical Center will foster a statewide community of curious learners."

Bob Bing-You, MD, JMMC