



Research project summary

The population health and healthcare burden of poor dietary patterns and potential strategies for reducing mortality, morbidity and healthcare use in Canada

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Chronic diseases are major causes of reduced quality of life, increased hospitalization, and premature death. Poor diet is a common preventable risk factor and likely plays a significant role in morbidity and premature death in Canada. This project will describe dietary patterns of Canadians and how these patterns have changed over time. The study will also calculate the impact of unhealthy dietary patterns on chronic diseases (cardiovascular diseases), death and healthcare use. The health and healthcare benefits of strategies to improve dietary patterns will also be examined. Culturally-relevant dietary patterns will be "reverse engineered" to examine how to reduce health and healthcare burden and inequalities among Canadians. This study will use the nutrition focused Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) 2004, and the forthcoming 2015 cycle. The CCHS 2004 is unique worldwide; it is the largest population-based dietary survey linked to health and health care outcomes. These data allow very detailed assessment of health and social outcomes. Robust population health policy models will be created to support evidence-based nutrition policy for reducing the burden of poor dietary patterns. Policy actors will be involved in model development to ensure that models address questions of real-world policy relevance. Health calculators (risk-assessment tools) will be created from the policy models. These calculators can be used by individual Canadians and their clinicians to increase awareness of health risks from poor dietary patterns. This project will provide the first evidence on dietary patterns and health and healthcare outcomes at the national population level, an essential component for development of nutritional guidelines and policies. The models and supporting data linkages will create a lasting infrastructure and will position Canada as a world leader in population health assessment of nutrition policy.

[Back to summary of all grants awarded to The Ottawa Hospital in this competition \(May 2017\)](#)

