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MRI scanner dedicated exclusively to mental health arrives at Douglas Institute

Montreal, Monday, November 8, 2010 – The arrival of a state-of-the-art magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanner marks an important step in the construction of the future Brain Imaging Centre at the Douglas Mental Health University Institute. The scanner will play a major role in the only centre in Quebec to be entirely dedicated to mental health research and care. Soon, researchers will soon be able to increase the pace of their work, with a direct benefit to patients.

With this technology, it will enable:

Better diagnoses. Currently, all diagnoses – including those of major depression, anxiety disorders, and schizophrenia - are based on the observation of patients and self-reports. The scanners will make it possible to identify biological markers of various mental disorders in the patients' brain.

Better prognoses. New brain-imaging measures will enable researchers to make better predictions of the evolution of the patient's disorder, thus leading to better-adapted treatments.

Longitudinal studies. On-site scanners will make it possible to monitor the progress of more patients over longer periods of time.

Good news for mental health

Jacques Hendlisz, Director General, Douglas Institute

"We are proud of the progress we are seeing in this project, one of many research initiatives at the Douglas. The use of the MRI on site at the Douglas is great news for people who are living with a mental illness and for the researchers who are so passionate about what they do. We are grateful to the Government of Quebec and the Government of Canada for its crucial support towards this high technology project. The Douglas Brain Imaging Centre is receiving federal funding through the Knowledge Infrastructure Program and provincial funding from the ministère du Développement économique, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation through the ministère de la santé. Of a total sum of close to 20 million dollars dedicated to the construction of the Brain Imaging Centre, close to 4,5 millions dollars is invested in this human scanner.

Véronique Bohbot, Ph.D., neuroscience researcher, Douglas Institute

"In the course of my research work, I require the most sophisticated brain imaging available, in part to help me understand the aging brain and the mechanisms associated with memory. I am very pleased that our research centre is succeeding yet again in offering top notch facilities to its scientists."

Ronald Sehn, Director, Technical Services, Douglas Institute

“Construction of the Brain Imaging Centre is on schedule, and the official opening is planned for March 2011. Our construction site management team is doing a very good job.”

A thirteen-ton technology from Siemens : the Magnetom-Trio, a TIM System

Around the world, TIM (Total Imaging Matrix technology) has become one of the new standards in MRI. The imaging system has a 3 Tesla magnet technology with unprecedented flexibility, accuracy and speed.

(*) TESLA (T) unit

The tesla (symbol: T), named in honour of Serbian-American physician and inventor Nikola Tesla, is the International System of Units (SI) derived unit of magnetic induction (sometimes called magnetic flux density or magnetic field).

Douglas Brain Imaging Research Centre – official opening, March 2011
Martin Lepage, Ph.D., director

The centre, with an area of over 1,200 m², will be located at the Douglas Mental Health University Institute and will accommodate two scanners, one dedicated to human studies and the other to animal (rodent) studies. These two MRI scanners on the technological cutting edge will be housed in a new building erected specifically for brain imaging research and will also offer other complementary human imaging techniques (cerebral electrophysiology, transcranial magnetic stimulation and physiological monitoring).

Cerebral imaging has been a priority research field at the Douglas Institute for the past 10 years. These techniques occupy an increasingly important place in the field of neuroscience and mental health research, because they open up new perspectives regarding the mechanisms and processes involved in mental disorders

About the Douglas – www.douglas.qc.ca

The Douglas is a world-class institute affiliated with McGill University and the World Health Organization. Its mission is to treat people suffering from mental illness and offer them both hope and healing. The Institute's teams of specialists and researchers continually advance scientific knowledge, integrate it into patient care, and share it with the community to increase awareness and thus eliminate stigma around mental illness.

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