

DOHaD World Congress 2022 Debrief



**DOHaD WORLD
CONGRESS 2022
VANCOUVER • CANADA**
EQUITY • ENVIRONMENT • ENGAGEMENT

Thanks to DOHaD Canada, with the leadership of Stephen Matthews (Toronto) President, for their contributions to ensuring that the 2022 World Congress, held in Vancouver in August 2022, was a smashing success.

Co-chairs John Challis and Janice Bailey salute the entire organising team for not only putting on an exceptional Congress full of science and networking, but also for persevering through the nearly impossible task of organising a Congress during the last 2 years of a global pandemic. It was an incredibly stressful time not just for the world, but also for the Organising Committee that had to first postpone the initial Congress, and then work very hard to bring us all together face-to-face! Thanks to Kristin Connor (Ottawa) Communications Chair for patiently ensuring that the congress website and social media kept the international community up to date!

The Congress was officially kicked off on October 12 and 13, 2021 with a Satellite Meeting on Domestic Animal DOHaD & Epigenetics held virtually and organised by Marc-Andre Sirard (Laval University, Quebec). Featuring cutting edge research from all over the world, this initial Satellite meeting had representatives from more than 10 countries (Canada, USA, France, Brazil, Ireland, Mexico, Italy, Argentina, Germany and Spain) in attendance. Presentations covered a broad range of topics from germ cells through lactation across many different perspectives, mainly related to domestic animals. The main Congress was preceded by a second Satellite meeting on Indigenous health through a DOHaD lens piloted by Alexandra King (University of Saskatchewan) and Rhonda Bell (University of Alberta, Edmonton).

The World Congress began August 27, 2022 with one and a half days of outstanding sessions organised by trainees for trainees and covering topics such as career building, community engagement in research, networking and implementation science. Kozeta Miliku and Amanda Rowlands co-chaired this excellent trainee workshop.

The trainee sessions were followed by an open public panel on the impact of pandemics and trauma on child development, sponsored by the Fonds de Recherche du Québec and moderated by Rémi Quirion, Québec's Chief Scientist. Approximately 600 people attended this open public session.

The World Congress was held as a partnership between the International DOHaD Society, DOHaD Canada and a **Canadian Network of Centres of Excellence (NCE)**, the **Kids Brain Health Network**. **James Reynolds (Kingston) CSO Kids Brain Health Network** was involved throughout



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the congress organisation. We were excited to share science space with **KBHN members** at the different sessions, including social events. In total, 1014 delegates from more than 50 countries were registered for the Congress and more than 800 abstracts presented in both oral and poster format. Presentations included plenary sessions each day of the highest ranked abstracts submitted by trainees. Many thanks to Wendy Robinson (Vancouver) and Pablo Nepomnaschy (Vancouver), who were Local Program Vice-Co-Chairs.

The Congress opening included remarks by the Hon Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Health in the Canadian government. We hosted 10 invited speakers from around the world giving keynote plenary talks on topics ranging from Indigenous Health to climate change to the gut microbiome, with 18 different Symposia, as well as the Winners of the Society's David Barker Medal and Nick Hales Award, Peter Nathanielsz and Emilio Herrera respectively. Three of our invited speakers were past winners of the prestigious Canada Gairdner Foundation Global Health Award. Keynote speakers included Shinichi Kuriyama from Tohoku who spoke about the harmonisation of genetics and lifestyle in personalised medicine.

As always, our Congresses rely heavily on fundraising and sponsorship - and this year the Congress Sponsorship group, led by Stephen Lye did an outstanding job of raising more than \$800,000 for our meeting from a diverse set of sponsors from industry to academia. Some noteworthy sponsors include FRQ, CIHR, Simon Fraser University, the Lunenfeld Tanenbaum Research Institute (Toronto) and the Dr Rogers fund of the Hecht Foundation.

We would like to extend a special acknowledgement to Victoria De Luca (Toronto) Executive Lead, for her outstanding professionalism. Her participation was critical to the success of the congress.