



**W**elcome to the second newsletter of the POWER Study!

I am delighted to tell you that our first report card will soon be published. It will include new and up-to-date information on the overall burden of illness and disability for Ontario women (including chronic diseases) and access to health care, as well as comprehensive analyses of women's health care in the areas of cancer, cardiovascular disease, and depression. We have 5 large chapters in this report card, so we have decided to release sequentially over the next few months beginning in January 2008 (*Please see page 2 for the release schedule*).

We invite you to visit our website at [www.powerstudy.ca](http://www.powerstudy.ca) often to see the announcements of each chapter's publication. The chapters will be available for everyone online to view or download.

We couldn't have achieved this without the many partnerships we have developed over the last year and a half.

For example, we are delighted that the Ontario branch of the Heart and Stroke Foundation will partner with us to launch the cardiovascular chapter in February. Many other stakeholders, including the Ontario March of Dimes, the Ontario Women's Health Network, and the Ontario Prevention Clearinghouse have expressed interest in helping us disseminate our chapters so that they

reach consumers and providers of women's health care across the province.

We are pleased that there is interest in the tools we have developed. The Ontario Health Quality Council will include several POWER study indicators in its 2008 annual report. The Public Health Agency of Canada has requested permission to use our online survey and indicator selection criteria.



POWER Study Staff

In addition, we are actively seeking input to help maximize the usefulness of our data to those improving the health system in Ontario. Over the next month we will be presenting our preliminary results for feedback to the Ministry of Health Promotion, Ministry of Health and Long Term-Care, and the board of directors of Echo, Ontario's new women's health agency.

We have also partnered with data providers to gain access to the latest

information on women's health. For example, the Public Health Agency of Canada has provided mortality data and University of Waterloo colleagues have helped us analyze gender differences in home care use in Ontario. The Cardiac Care Network of Ontario provided their provincial database, and we have conducted the first in-depth gender analysis of cardiac care and equity in the province.

Thank you to all our stakeholders and partners who have generously given their feedback and assistance with our report card. We hope you join us in celebrating the release of the chapters, and find the information useful to your work.

And I do hope to see you at our annual Holiday Party, December 18! For more information or to RSVP please contact us at [powerstudy@smh.toronto.on.ca](mailto:powerstudy@smh.toronto.on.ca)

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## POWER out & about

- Arlene Bierman gave the annual population health series keynote speech at Mount Sinai Hospital on September 20, 2007 entitled *"Closing the gaps: making the health system work well for older women."*
- We held POWER Study Roundtables on October 4 and November 30, 2007 to discuss the preliminary results from our first report card.
- Elizabeth Lin, POWER Study co-investigator, presented the preliminary results on *"Sex disparities in the treatment of depression"* at ICES on November 13, 2007.
- Arlene Bierman published an editorial in the December 4, 2007 edition of the Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ) called *"Sex matters: gender disparities in quality and outcomes of care."*

## Feature: Why Equity?

*Where inequities in health and health care are revealed, there is potential for intervention and improvement.*

One of the unique features of the POWER Study is its singular focus on equity. This stems from our acknowledgement that the differences in health and health care *between* groups of women may be even greater than the differences between women and men. Previous research in the area of cardiac care, for example, has shown that women with cardiovascular disease experience longer delays accessing appropriate health care and often receive poorer quality care than men. But research also shows that these gaps may be greater for groups such as low income women, Aboriginal women, immigrant women, women of colour, and women who live in rural or remote areas.

In order to understand this better for Ontario, we felt it was important to explicitly examine differences between subgroups of women associated with socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and geography. We investigate our data first



by sex (female vs male), and then we further stratify groups of women and men by income level, educational level, ethnicity, immigration status, and geography whenever possible. This allows us to identify where inequities exist in health status, access to and quality of care, and health outcomes.

Our ultimate goal with producing the report card is to build the evidence base on health inequities so that tools can be developed to reduce these inequities. In addition to the subgroup analyses, the POWER Study incorporates equity

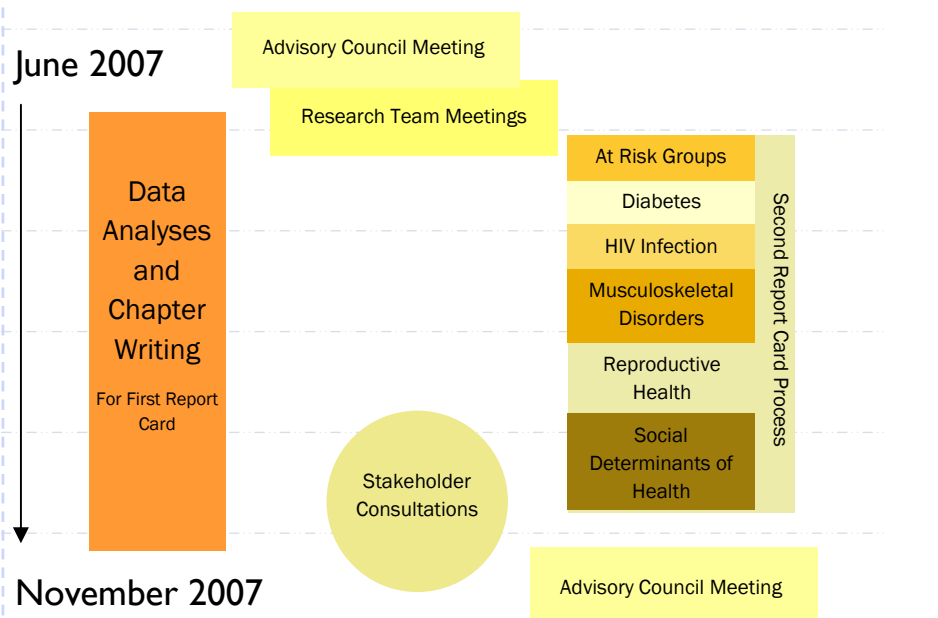
analyses by using indicators that are "modifiable"; that is, the indicators relate to health care processes and outcomes that are amenable to change. Where inequities in health and health care are revealed, there is potential for intervention and improvement. We can develop interventions to try to reduce these differences. Not only does the POWER study document the inequities that currently exist, it provides a baseline so that efforts to improve equity in Ontario can be monitored over time.

### POWER Holiday Celebration

We are holding our annual Holiday Party on Dec 18, 2007 for all the friends of the POWER Study. Please RSVP to

[powerstudy@smh.toronto.on.ca](mailto:powerstudy@smh.toronto.on.ca)

## POWER Progress



### First Report Card Release Schedule

- January 2008**—Access & Burden of Illness Chapter
- February 2008**—Cardiovascular Disease Chapter
- March 2008**—Cancer Chapter
- April 2008**—Depression Chapter

### About the POWER Study

POWER is a partnership between St. Michael's Hospital and the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES) in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, and is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.\* More than 30 researchers are collaborating on the study, as well as an advisory council, technical expert panels, and community stakeholders from across the province.

More information can be found at:  
[www.powerstudy.ca](http://www.powerstudy.ca),  
 or by emailing us at  
[powerstudy@smh.toronto.on.ca](mailto:powerstudy@smh.toronto.on.ca)

Please get in touch and tell us what you would like to see in future newsletters!

\*The views expressed in this newsletter are the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the MOHLTC.