

**December 18, 2007**

## **Sleep Initiative**

### **Standard Life Contributes to Further Study and Better Treatments Through Sleep Disorders Research**

**The Standard Life Assurance Company of Canada** is helping the experts at the **Douglas Mental Health University Institute** continue to make breakthroughs in sleep disorder research and treatment. Their new and substantial philanthropic support aids individuals and their families in dealing more effectively with problems such as jet lag, night shift work and sleep disruptions.

Standard Life understands the importance of dealing with mental health problems that affect employees, their families, and the entire community. When mental health issues are not addressed, the costs can be staggering. The Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association estimates that 30-50 percent of insurance disability payments are associated with mental health problems, and notes that such problems are the leading cause of long-term absence from work.

To help individuals with sleep difficulties, Douglas Researcher Diane Boivin, MD, PhD, and her team have recently created a website for the Centre for Study and Treatment of Circadian Rhythms, thanks to the donation from Standard Life. The site may be viewed at [www.douglasrecherche.qc.ca/circadian](http://www.douglasrecherche.qc.ca/circadian). It provides information on sleep, how to improve sleep hygiene, and updates on ongoing research projects. This donation of \$250,000, over a period of five years, also provides for further circadian rhythm and sleep research, and supports guest speaker engagements.

"Part of our mandate is to conduct cutting-edge research on sleep-wake disorders to help the public," says Boivin. "If left undiagnosed, these disorders may result in fatigue, and poor job or school performance. Our site discusses the biology of sleep and circadian rhythms, and gives tips on how to avoid these difficulties. Our ultimate goal is to improve the physical and mental health of individuals by offering them scientifically-based information."

## **Research Projects**

Researchers at the Centre for Study and Treatment of Circadian Rhythms conduct multidisciplinary research on human circadian physiology (rhythmic recurring events) and sleep. Research projects include:

- development of assessment tools for human circadian rhythms;
- identification of circadian clock genes and resetting by environment cues;
- study of fatigue management approaches for people involved in shift work;
- evaluation of the circadian modulation of sleep and mood in mental illnesses.

## **About the Douglas - [www.douglas.qc.ca](http://www.douglas.qc.ca)**

The Douglas is a world-class institute, affiliated with McGill University and the World Health Organization, which treats people suffering from mental illness and offers them hope and cures. Its 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 eliminating stigma around mental illness.

## **About Standard Life—[www.standardlife.ca](http://www.standardlife.ca)**

The Standard Life Assurance Company of Canada, a subsidiary of Standard Life plc headquartered in Scotland, is a major investment, retirement, and financial protection company. It offers a wide range of financial products and services to over 1.31 million individuals, including group insurance and pension plan members. Standard Life is committed to supporting the local community and educational institutions where it conducts its business. It focuses on four key areas in this regard, and one of them is supporting initiatives in the area of health education, research, and health promotion. Standard Life group has been a prominent player in the Canadian marketplace since 1833.

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