

and members who passed the Saskatchewan resolution would like MD to divest itself of any investments in military arms or equipment, she says.

“Military equipment has only one purpose, and that’s to kill,” says Dewar. “That is hardly consistent with the goals of an organization that’s devoted to health.”

That kind of investment prohibition is increasingly difficult because of corporate consolidation, says Hague. “The General Electric Corporation makes jet engines for both commercial and military uses. Does that mean we would not invest in General Electric? Notwithstanding that they also manufacture medical and diagnostic imaging equipment? My point is that you get into a realm that becomes impossible to manage.”

Physicians who want to invest in ethical funds can do so through MD’s Consolidated Account, using third-party funds, he stresses.

Physicians for Global Survival will now urge individual members of their organization and, more broadly, the CMA, to ensure their investments are in ethical funds, Dewar says.

“Our next step is going to be on the individual level, to make sure MD Management knows of those of us who have actually taken our money elsewhere,” she says. —Laura Eggertson, Ottawa.

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The envelope please: 2007 Gairdner winners

Five world-class biomedical scientists are this year’s Gairdner International recipients. The winners, which were announced on Apr. 18, will each receive \$30 000, a certificate and a La Couer statue in Toronto on Oct. 25.

Founded in 1959 by Toronto businessman James Gairdner, the awards recognize and reward the achievements of medical researchers whose work contributes significantly to improving the quality of human life. Since their inception, the Gairdner Foundation has given 289 awards to distinguished scientists from 13 countries; 68 Gairdner

winners have become Nobel Laureates (www.gairdner.org).

The work of these 5 “truly outstanding scientists reflects the importance of basic discoveries that lead to a better understanding of human disease and the development of effective treatment,” said the Gairdner Foundation President Dr. John Dirks. The winners were chosen through a rigorous, 2-part, arms-length process. They are:

- Prof. David Allis, head of the Laboratory of Chromatin Biology at Rockefeller University, New York, and Kim A. Nasmyth, Whitley chair, Department of Biochemistry at Oxford University. They “are honoured for their brilliant advances in understanding genetic replication and cell division and how it can go wrong, leading to errors in human development and in making us susceptible to cancer,” said Dirks.
- Dr. Dennis J. Slamon, executive vice-chair for research and professor, Department of Medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles School of Medicine, who “almost single-handedly discovered an overactive oncogene in one-third of women with breast cancer, developed the antibody directed at abnormal growth, and designed the necessary clinical trials” that resulted in the development of the targeted therapy trastuzumab (Herceptin), said Dirks.
- Harry F. Noller, director, Center for Molecular Biology of RNA at the University of California, Santa Cruz, California, and Thomas A. Steitz, Department of Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute at Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, who “contributed to our understanding of the translation of genetic information at the level where proteins are made and where antibiotic action can be targeted,” Dirks said.

The Foundation also sponsors a nation-wide program in October, including lectures at 18 academic centres and culminating in a 2-day “Minds that Matter” symposium at the University of Toronto, at which all 5 winners will speak. — Barbara Sibbald, *CMAJ*

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News @ a glance

Internet drug sales down: Canadian Internet pharmacy sales to the United States plummeted nearly 50% in 2006, compared with 2005, reports IMS Health Canada, which provides market information on the pharmaceutical and health care industries. In 2005, sales to the US were \$420 million; in 2006 they were \$211 million. IMS Senior Industry Expert, Ian Therriault, says the change is due to a higher exchange rate, the new US Medicare prescription plan and negative media coverage about counterfeit and foreign drugs.



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TB levels off: The global tuberculosis epidemic has levelled off for the first time since the WHO declared TB a public health emergency in 1993. The Mar. 22 Global Tuberculosis Control Report stated that almost 60% of TB cases are now detected, and of those, the vast majority are cured. Over the past decade, 26 million patients have been treated for TB. However, the disease still kills 4400 people daily or an estimated 1.6 million in 2005. An addition US\$1.1 billion is needed to meet the 2007 funding requirements set by the Global Plan to Stop TB (2006-15). In related news, the World Medical Association is piloting a new online TB course to help physicians better diagnose, prevent and treat multi-drug-resistant TB (www.wma.net). — Compiled by Barbara Sibbald, *CMAJ*

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