



biochemistry at the University of California at San Francisco. Awareness of his work grew when prions were blamed for causing the variant of Creutzfeldt–Jakob disease that killed several people in England. That outbreak was tied to meat taken from cattle that had developed BSE, popularly known as mad cow disease.

## Canada–China hospital being developed

Canadians are playing a key role in developing China's first joint-venture hospital. Interhealth Canada China Inc., an Ontario company, is majority owner of the development, known as

the Beijing/Toronto International Hospital Project. Construction of the first 80-bed phase is to begin this month, with the hospital expected to open late in 1998. Eventually it will have 250 beds.

Unlike most foreign-run hospitals in China, which employ British or American managers, the Beijing hospital will be run by Canadians. Fifty staff members, including a medical director, are currently being recruited. Forty percent of medical staff will be Canadian, with the first 15 Canadian doctors being recruited next summer. Initially, all Chinese physicians employed at the hospital will be foreign trained; Chinese doc-

tors hired later will be given additional training at the hospital. The first Canadians on staff will move to Beijing about March.

The hospital will be aimed at the foreign-expatriate market, although it may also be available to Chinese employees of multinational corporations and entrepreneurs. Wilson Parasiuk, chair of Interhealth Canada China Inc., says there are 160 000 expatriates in China and the hospital will fill a growing demand for in-country treatment. Today, most foreign patients with a serious illness are evacuated. The new hospital hopes to receive Canadian accreditation within 2 years of opening.

## New health clinic for Asian women

Vancouver's Asian Women's Health Clinic, which was established in 1994 to increase the rate of cervical- and breast-cancer screening among Chinese women, has had to expand to meet growing demand. It is now located at Mount Saint Joseph Hospital, a major centre for multicultural facilities, and has tripled the number of hours it is open because of the area's continuing influx of immigrants.

The clinic addresses language and cultural barriers that make women leery of seeking gynecologic and breast examinations by employing only female doctors who speak Mandarin and Cantonese. Dr. Lorna Sent, the medical director, says male physicians, even those who speak a Chinese dialect, present the major cultural barrier to these women. There are still relatively few female physicians of Chinese descent living in BC's Lower Mainland. More than 40% of women using the clinic for the first time had never had a breast examination.

As well, studies indicate a far

higher incidence of cervical cancer in Asian women than Caucasian women. Asian women generally consider gynecologic care separate from the other health issues that



**Dr. Lorna Sent: Male MDs a barrier for female Asian patients?**

bring them to a family doctor's office, explains Sent. Educational material on Pap smears and breast

health has been developed at the clinic, and women undergo screening mammography on site.

Regina Li of SUCCESS, a Chinese community agency, says the clinic has been "very successful." Because of its word-of-mouth popularity, the agency no longer needs to promote the facility. Li says most of its clients have immigrated to Canada within the last 3 years and are attracted to it because of its female physicians. Only about half require their doctor to speak Chinese, since they possess adequate English.

Dr. Lois Yelland, medical health officer for Vancouver's East Health Unit, says the sheer numbers of Asian women needing service prompted the decision to open a clinic dedicated to them. Other clinics have taken a different approach. The Bridge Clinic, which is also at Mount St. Joseph Hospital, attracts women from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Its goal is to help women adapt to the Canadian health care system by encouraging them to seek care from their own family doctors. © — Heather Kent