

## Who we are

The Canadian Association for Neuroscience (CAN) is the largest association of neuroscientists in Canada dedicated to advancing brain research. Our association is composed of over one thousand researchers, who work at academic institutions across the country. We share the common goal of ensuring neuroscience remains one of the greatest research and innovation strengths of Canada.

## What we recommend

A bold plan to invest in basic research and the next generation of scientists for the benefit of all Canadians

**Recommendation 1:** We urge the government to adopt a **four-year plan to double the budgets of the three main federal funding agencies (CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC) starting with a 25% increase in the next budget.** This recommendation aims to bring Canadian investment in scientific research to a level commensurate to that of other G7 countries.

**Recommendation 2:** That the government of Canada increase its support for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows by **50% for graduate scholarships and postdoctoral fellowships**, as some scholarships are currently below the low-income cut-off 22k CAD for a person living alone in a major Canadian city.

**Recommendation 3:** That the government of Canada make **research on the Brain and Mental Health a national priority** by investing in research to understand the brain through well-established and trusted organizations in the field.

## Why this is needed now

Fundamental research is key to informing Canada's response to new challenges.

- **Brain and Mental Health disorders and diseases** are the leading cause of disability and the second leading cause of death worldwide<sup>1</sup>. Through their research, Canadian neuroscientists work tirelessly to provide hope to Canadians who live with diseases and conditions for which there are currently no cures, and few treatments. Canada's scientists are recognized leaders in research in many fields of neuroscience including stroke, autism, memory, sleep, pain, artificial intelligence, and spinal cord injury.
- **Providing Good Jobs for Canadians** – Investing in scientific research leads to the creation of jobs for highly qualified personnel (HQP) within research laboratories, industry, government, and the public sector. Our trainees constitute important assets for medical and high-tech companies in Canada, who are looking to fill high paying and competitive job opportunities.
- **Diversifying and Strengthening Canada's Economy** – *Made-in-Canada* discoveries are the foundation for innovation that supports a stronger and more diverse Canadian economy.

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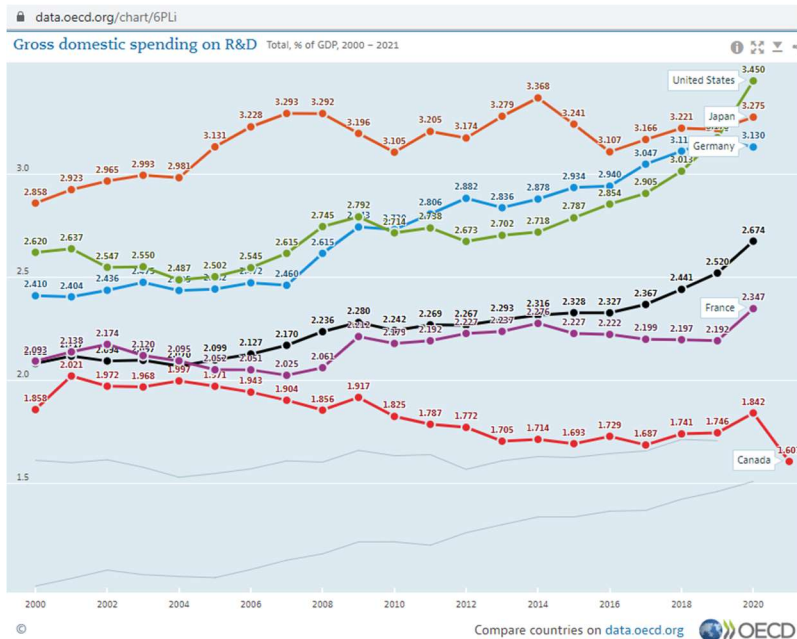
<sup>1</sup> (Feigin et al. Lancet Neurol. 2019;18(5):459-480. doi:10.1016/S1474-4422(18)30499-X)



# CAN-ACN

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR NEUROSCIENCE  
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES NEUROSCIENCES

## Canada is falling behind in science funding



Canadian scientists are finding it increasingly difficult to remain competitive and for Canada to attract new talent as the disparity in research support with other G7 countries continues to widen.

According to the latest data from the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development <http://www.oecd.org/>) Canada is the only country in the G7 whose investments in Research and Development have **steadily declined over the last 20 years.**

CIHR Project grants are the core funding mechanism for biomedical research in Canada. Unfortunately, the **success rates for funding applications at CIHR have declined since 2005**, from a 33% success rate to close to 19% in 2021 (less than one in five successful applications), leading to financial insecurity for laboratories. One clear contributing factor to the decline in success rates is **stagnation in the CIHR budget between 2006 and 2018**. Moreover, application pressure from researchers has increased (3850 applications in 2006 vs. 4395 in 2021), and the cost of experimental materials increases at a rate higher than inflation.

Trainees that successfully compete for Canada Graduate Scholarships (Master's program; CGS-M), receive an \$17.5K CAD per year award, an amount that has not kept up with inflation and is stagnant since 2003. **This is below the low-income level cut-off** of \$22k CAD for a person living alone in a major Canadian city. Providing a living wage is the base for **equity, diversity and inclusion**, and an essential requirement if we are to attract the brightest minds from diverse backgrounds and not only those who are independently wealthy.

**Canada has much to lose by not supporting its scientists.** The competition is strong, and even if Canada's quality of life is enviable, high caliber researchers are attracted by the much higher financial means available to them in the United States, and other countries. If Canada does not increase its support for science, the **reality of the brain drain** will worsen.

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