



31st international  
symposium  
on ALS/MND

# 31st international symposium on ALS/MND

# Montreal

Canada

9 – 11 December 2020

## First announcement Call for abstracts

Co-hosts: ALS Society of Canada and ALS Society of Quebec

Organised by the Motor Neuron Disease Association  
in co-operation with the International Alliance of ALS/MND Associations



# 31st International Symposium on ALS/MND

9 – 11 December 2020, Montreal, Canada

The International Symposium on ALS/MND is a unique annual event that brings together leading international researchers and health and social care professionals to present and debate key innovations in their respective fields.

The Symposium is planned as two parallel meetings, one on biomedical research and the other on advances in clinical research and management of people affected by ALS/MND. Joint sessions consider issues of mutual interest, challenging current views and practices.

## Organiser of the Symposium:

### Motor Neurone Disease Association

Francis Crick House, 6 Summerhouse Road  
Northampton NN3 6BJ  
Tel: (-) 44 1604 250505  
Email: [symposium@mndassociation.org](mailto:symposium@mndassociation.org)  
Website: [www.symposium.mndassociation.org](http://www.symposium.mndassociation.org)

## The Symposium is being held in co-operation with:

### The International Alliance of ALS/MND Associations

Tel: (-) 1 647 203 2117  
Email: [alliance@als-mnd.org](mailto:alliance@als-mnd.org)  
Website: [www.alsmndalliance.org](http://www.alsmndalliance.org)

## Co-hosts for the Symposium:

### ALS Canada

393 University Avenue, Suite 1701  
Toronto, ON M5G 1E6  
Canada  
Tel: (-) 1 416 497 2267  
Email: [research@als.ca](mailto:research@als.ca)  
Website: [www.als.ca](http://www.als.ca)

### ALS Society of Quebec

5415 Pare suite 200  
Mount-Royal  
Quebec H4P 1P7  
Canada  
Tel: (1) 1 514 725 2653  
Email: [info@sla-quebec.ca](mailto:info@sla-quebec.ca)  
Website: [www.als-quebec.ca](http://www.als-quebec.ca)

## Symposium Programme Committee:

Kevin Talbot  
*(Chair, Programme Committee)*  
Ammar Al-Chalabi  
*(Chair-Elect, Programme Committee)*  
Angela Genge  
*(Chair, clinical research and management meeting)*  
Heather Durham  
*(Chair, biomedical research meeting)*  
Nick Cole  
Brian Dickie  
Nick Goldup  
Sanjay Kalra  
Janice Robertson  
David Taylor

# Biomedical research meeting

## Chair of the biomedical research meeting:

**Heather Durham, McGill University, Montreal, Canada**

It will be my great pleasure to welcome you to Montreal, the province of Quebec, and to Canada for the 31st International Symposium on ALS/MND. The meeting will be held in the heart of the city, in close proximity to historic Old Montreal, allowing visitors to experience the French heritage and ambiance of this vibrant cosmopolitan city.

The International Symposium on ALS/MND is the world's premier meeting for presentation and debate on biomedical, clinical and care management aspects of the disease. As we have learned more and more about the genetics and biology of motor neuron diseases, a major challenge for researchers is how to translate that information from the lab bench into effective therapies. The scientific program will tackle issues of paramount importance to this end, including disease pathogenesis, stratification, common neurodegenerative mechanisms, screening models, target identification and markers of target engagement, inter/intracellular communication and therapeutic delivery. This meeting provides a unique opportunity for biomedical researchers not only to share the latest information on disease pathogenesis and potential therapeutic targets, but also to appreciate the reality of the disease from the perspective of the patients, medical practitioners and caregivers and to feel part of the overall team effort. For clinical researchers, the basic science presentations are a source of knowledge about what is coming up through the pipeline.

The Symposium will benefit from the rich concentration of neuroscience research and discovery for which Quebec and Canada are

known. The universities in Montreal (McGill University, Université de Montréal, Université du Québec à Montréal, Concordia University) and in Quebec City (Université Laval) are home to a multitude of departments and research institutes devoted to neuroscience and neurological disease. Quebec and Canada as a whole have a strong network of researchers and clinicians devoted to understanding and developing treatments for motor neuron disease, ably supported by the ALS Societies based in the provinces across Canada, including the ALS Society of Quebec, and the ALS Society of Canada's Research Program, funding innovative research and fostering collaboration within Canada's research community.

Please join us for an exciting meeting and plan to spend some extra time to enjoy what Montreal and the surrounding area have to offer. See you in December!

Proposed platform session themes include:

**Disease models**

**Motor neuron biology and pathology**

**RNA processing and dysregulation**

**Neuroinflammation**

**Protein stability and degradation**

**Genetics and genomics**

**Informatics**

**Cellular homeostasis**

**Target discovery and preclinical development**

# Clinical research and management meeting

## Chair of the clinical research and management meeting:

**Angela Genge, McGill University, Montreal, Canada**

I look forward to welcoming you to Canada and the beautiful city of Montreal this December. Ranked as one of the top spots in North America for meetings and conventions, Montreal is the perfect location for the 31st International Symposium on ALS/MND: it promises to be a meeting encompassing innovation, education and collaboration, as we come together to update our colleagues from across the world on the latest developments in the diagnosis, treatment and management of ALS/MND.

The past decade has seen a transformation in scientific understanding of the disease. Advances in genetics and the creation of new disease models have not only radically changed our view of disease biology but are also catalysing a plethora of novel translational strategies and therapeutic trials, beyond the traditional small molecule approaches of the past. There is increasing hope, even confidence, that we are entering a new era in therapy development.

However, more still needs to be done if we are to pave the way for emerging treatments. New biomarkers are urgently needed to facilitate early diagnosis and improve prognostic accuracy. Novel trial design, to increase the efficiency and lower the cost of clinical trials, needs to be successfully embedded alongside clinical practice. Stratification of patients into

more homogeneous subgroups will not only improve the design and analysis of clinical trials, but also aid the comprehensive and timely multidisciplinary management of this complex disease, which has been demonstrated to produce tangible improvements in survival and quality of life. We also need to embrace emerging technologies in care and research and improve our understanding of the challenges and generate outcomes that are most relevant and important to patients, caregivers and their families.

We hope that Montreal's legendary ambiance and multicultural experience will stimulate the sharing of knowledge, generation of new ideas and creation of new and productive collaboration across the global ALS/MND community as we strive to pick up the pace of progress.

We hope to see you in Montreal!

Proposed platform session themes include:

**Clinical trials and trial design**

**Assistive technology**

**Epidemiology**

**Metabolism and nutrition**

**Respiratory support**

**Disease heterogeneity**

**Surrogate markers**

**End of life care**

**Non-motor symptoms**

# Call for abstracts

**Montreal, Canada, 9-11 December 2020**

## Summary of Conditions of Acceptance

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All abstracts must be submitted online, via a link on the MND Association's website ([www.symposium.mndassociation.org/abstracts](http://www.symposium.mndassociation.org/abstracts)). Abstracts cannot be accepted via fax or email.

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Abstracts must be in English, and be no longer than 450 words.

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Authors should provide a clear description of methodology and present statistically robust data (including 'n' and 'p' values), where appropriate.

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Authors may submit an abstract for consideration in one of three categories: oral, poster or work in progress/care practice (WIP/CP) poster presentations.

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WIP/CP is defined as: preliminary work (little or no data/results), care practice or case studies.

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The submitting author must provide an email address to which all Symposium correspondence will be sent.

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Please ensure you have the correct permissions to submit your abstract (eg from collaborators or funders).

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Due to poster space restrictions this year, we may have to limit the number of accepted abstracts and themes for posters.

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Where an abstract is accepted as a poster presentation, at least one author is required to register and present the poster in person at the Symposium.

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All abstracts will be made available to download from the MND Association's website prior to the Symposium.

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Abstracts accepted as 'WIP/CP' will be published on the MND Association's website.

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All other abstracts will be published in an open access online supplement to the journal Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis and Frontotemporal Degeneration.

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Authors will also be asked to confirm if the presenting author is eligible and willing to be included in the poster prize competition (see below).

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Formal acceptance of an abstract is conditional upon payment of the registration fee.

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Full instructions and Conditions of Acceptance will be available on the MND Association's website before the opening of the submission system in early June 2020. These must be read before an abstract is submitted.

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Queries should be sent to [abstracts@mndassociation.org](mailto:abstracts@mndassociation.org).

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**Abstract submission system opens: week commencing 1 June 2020**

**Deadline for abstract submission: 24 June 2020**

## Poster Prize

The International Symposium on ALS/MND poster prize celebrates early-stage career ALS/MND researchers' outstanding work, presented at the conference poster session.

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Prizes will be awarded for the best clinical and best biomedical posters presented at the conference.

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Early career researchers are eligible to enter if they are aged 35 years or under on the abstract submission deadline date OR if they were awarded their PhD within three years of the abstract submission deadline.

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The initial stage of judging will be based on the abstracts, as submitted by the abstract submission deadline of 24 June 2020. Final judging of shortlisted posters will take place at the conference.

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Full terms and conditions for the poster prize will be available on the MND Association's website ([www.symposium.mndassociation.org/for-presenters/poster-prize](http://www.symposium.mndassociation.org/for-presenters/poster-prize)) following the opening of the submission system in June 2020.

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# Welcome to Montreal



© MU, Ville-Marie, ElMac Gene Pendon (2017) - Photo Henry MacDonald

The second largest French-speaking city in the world after Paris, Montreal (in the Canadian province of Quebec) is known for its superb cuisine, vibrant nightlife, colourful festivals and cultural diversity. It has a rich colonial history and is a cosmopolitan hub of international trade. Montreal's landmarks, museums, nightclubs, parks, shopping districts and galleries provide ample opportunities for exploration and entertainment.

Old Montreal is one of the most popular spots in the city, and with good reason. It is a cobblestoned district lined with boutiques, galleries and restaurants, all housed among well-preserved buildings dating back to the 17th and 18th centuries, such as the Notre-Dame Basilica and Château Ramezay. Other neighbourhoods worth exploring include the Plateau, Mile End, Little Italy and Griffintown and a trip to Mount-Royal Park, one of the city's largest green spaces, will reward the visitor with stunning views.

There are numerous museums and galleries in Montreal, some of which are dedicated to Canadian history and art. Carefully curated temporary and permanent exhibitions make venues like the Pointe-à-Callière Museum of Archaeology and History and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts well worth a visit.

Montreal is a haven for great shopping. With a huge selection of high-end and vintage boutiques, department stores, flea markets and shopping malls, there are options to suit all tastes and budgets. With over 32 kilometres of underground

tunnels connecting office towers, hotels, universities and more, it is possible to shop for weeks without ever seeing the light of day!

Known to have one of the most varied selections of cuisine in North America, Montreal offers a fantastic choice of dining options. From five-star restaurants and carefully prepared dishes from around the world to legendary local diners and street-side food trucks, Montreal offers one-of-a-kind experiences for all tastes. Be sure to try poutine, a delicious Canadian dish that originated in the Quebec province.

Montreal is world-famous for its nightlife, offering a vast array of bars and clubs to choose from (many of which play host to sporting events). However, there is much more to nightlife in Montreal: as one of the largest cities in Canada, there are plenty of well-known performers (and not-so-well-known musicians) playing around the city on any given night. In winter, you can also catch a game of ice hockey when the local team, the Montreal Canadiens, plays at The Bell Centre.

For those wishing to extend their stay in Canada and maybe explore a little further afield, there's a great choice of places to visit. Sports fans might like to go skiing or dogsledding at Tremblant while city lovers can visit Ottawa or Quebec City, both within easy reach of Montreal on public transport.

**Montreal is an exhilarating, multi-cultural city that has much to offer its visitors.**

**Discover the delights of Montreal by visiting the following websites:  
[www.mtl.org](http://www.mtl.org) • [www.go-montreal.com](http://www.go-montreal.com) • [www.gotourismguides.com/montreal](http://www.gotourismguides.com/montreal)**



## Registration

Online registration is available from March at [www.symposium.mndassociation.org/register](http://www.symposium.mndassociation.org/register)

A provisional Symposium programme will be available on our website in August. The final programme will be available in November.

### Fees (payable in £ Sterling):

Early Bird Registration	(until 1 September)	<b>£400.00</b>
Standard Registration	(2 September – 18 October)	<b>£450.00</b>
Late Registration	(19 October – 22 November)	<b>£520.00</b>
Last Minute and Onsite	(23 November onwards)	<b>£800.00</b>

## General information

The Symposium proceedings will be in English.

### Symposium venue

Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth  
900 Rene Levesque Blvd W  
Montreal-Quebec, H3B 4A5  
Canada



### Travel

An international destination of choice, Montreal is easily accessed by land, water and air. *Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth* is a 20/25-minute drive from Montreal-Trudeau International Airport (YUL), which offers over 150 world destinations served by 30 carriers. Inbound travellers will find everything they need upon arrival, including tourist information and various options for making their way to the heart of the city: car rentals, limousine and taxi services, as well as airport shuttles. The 747 Express bus operates 24/7/365, costs \$10 and will get you to the nearest stop to the hotel (Rene-Levesque/Mansfield) in around 40 minutes. If you take a taxi, a trip downtown will cost you a flat rate of \$41, tip not included.

*Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth* is located directly above Central Station. The VIA Rail network connects many major cities to Montreal and is by far the easiest way to access downtown. The station also gives you access to taxis, car sharing, bus, BIXI bike rentals and the Underground Pedestrian Network. If you are travelling from the United States, the Amtrak trains offer daily departures from many American cities to downtown Montreal.

The hotel also has direct access to the Bonaventure metro (subway) station. Public transport and taxi are both convenient and affordable ways to get around Montreal. The metro system is clean, safe and fast and the public transit network is relatively simple, with just four lines connecting the downtown centre to major tourist sites, bus stops and train stations. The metro operates daily from 05.30am to 01.00am (01.30am on Saturdays), with an average wait time between trains of eight minutes (three minutes during rush hour).

To check entry requirements for Canada and to determine if you need to apply for a visa before you travel, visit [www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/visit-canada/entry-requirements-country](http://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/visit-canada/entry-requirements-country).

### Accommodation

Accommodation information will be available on our website at [www.symposium.mndassociation.org/accommodation](http://www.symposium.mndassociation.org/accommodation)

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