



CellCAN

Regenerative Medicine and
Cell Therapy Network

Public Engagement Plan 2015-2020

October 15, 2015



CellCAN is a Knowledge Mobilization Initiative Network (NCE-KM). Our mission is to mobilize stakeholders and knowledge across Canada to significantly advance regenerative medicine and cell therapy research and clinical development.

This Public Engagement Plan should be read in conjunction with CellCAN's Strategic Plan 2015-2020 and covers the same period. A Public engagement plan covers mainly three important aspects: dissemination to the public, media relations and public engagement.

1. CONTEXT

- In the future, cell therapy and regenerative medicine will help doctors cure many diseases that are presently untreatable. In the past 10 years, we have made unbelievable progress, and new treatments have become available.
- Canada has been a pioneer in stem cell research and has a very active network of research centres affiliated with universities and hospitals. The legal climate is favourable, we have a high number of qualified staff, and the country has a history of investing in this sector (although funding is now an issue).
- Cell therapy and regenerative medicine are major assets for Canada's economic growth and could help drastically reduce health care costs in the long run.
- CellCAN was created to bring together all Canadian stakeholders in cell therapy and regenerative medicine and facilitate knowledge sharing to foster stem cell research and clinical translation. Stakeholders in this network include not only the scientific community but also the lay public.

2. ISSUES IN ENGAGING WITH THE PUBLIC

Many issues relating to cell therapy and regenerative medicine were taken into account to orient and focus CellCAN's public engagement plan:

- The lay public knows little about cell therapy and regenerative medicine and generally confuses the concepts of stem cell therapy, cloning, and genetic manipulation.
- The high media coverage of embryonic stem cells has generated both interest in and reservations about stem cells.
- The terms "cell therapy" and "regenerative medicine" are not properly understood by the lay public: these terms aren't part of the standard vocabulary and are sometimes confused with other types of medicine.

- Research findings are not tailored to lay audiences and therefore not of interest to them.
- Ground-breaking scientific discoveries and innovations involving cell-based therapies generate strong enthusiasm but can lead to unrealistic expectations.
- The media can take shortcuts and provide inaccurate information. Examples of stem cell tourism and miracle cures like that of Gordie Howe abound in the news.
- Research costs are very high and require more funding than current levels. Awareness needs to be raised accordingly.
- CellCAN targets both the scientific community and lay audiences, which are very different.
- CellCAN represents stakeholders from across Canada, which means that we have to address regional differences, a vast territory, two official languages, and other issues.

3. OBJECTIVES

CellCAN's public engagement activities aim to achieve the following objectives:

- Increase awareness about stem cell therapy (medical and socioeconomic benefits).
- Provide valid and relevant information about stem cells, stem cell therapy and regenerative medicine to the general public and scientific community.
- Become the leading Canadian authority on cell therapy and regenerative medicine.
- Promote CellCAN and its activities.
- Publicize the discoveries and activities of the scientific community, with a special focus on those of the CellCAN network.
- Act as the main source of bilingual information in Canada on cell therapy and regenerative medicine.
- Showcase collaborations and interactions between stakeholders.
- Educate lay audiences about stem cell-related terminology.

4. TARGET AUDIENCES

CellCAN's diverse audiences have very different needs, expectations and levels of knowledge. Our communication efforts will be adapted accordingly. Our audiences are:

1. Cell and tissue manufacturing facilities
2. Cell therapy researchers and the scientific community
3. Health regulators and policy makers
4. Lay public
5. Patients
6. Health practitioners (clinicians, nurses)
7. Key opinion leaders
8. Advocacy groups
9. Industry (pharma, biotech, instruments)
10. Funding agencies

5. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND ETHOS

To achieve our objectives, we will:

- Present a consistent image in all of our communications.
- Ensure our messages are consistent with those of our partners.
- Integrate all media (website, newsletter, social media).
- Take a position in public debates and promote this position.
- Generate interest in CellCAN network discoveries.
- Provide information that is clear and easily understandable by the lay public (take science literacy into account).
- Ensure that the information is widely disseminated and readily accessible by the general public.
- Give stem cell research a human face (research advocates, storytelling).
- Generate media interest with a proactive approach.
- Maximize the use of social media.
- Consult and listen to all the different target audiences.

- Have a presence at scientific events.
- Take advantage of events related to regenerative medicine and cell-based therapy (International Stem Cell Awareness Day, partner events).
- Carry out joint communication initiatives with CellCAN partners.

6. KEY MESSAGES

Below are the messages that our spokespeople will convey in all of our public engagement activities:

- Stem cell therapy and regenerative medicine are no longer fiction: patients receive treatment, recover and return to a normal life.
- Stem cell therapy and regenerative medicine have huge potential. They give hope to millions of people suffering from cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disorders, eye problems, neurological dysfunctions, blood-related diseases and many others.
- These new therapies will have a tremendous impact on our health care system and will boost Canada's economy.
- Canada is a leader in stem cell research and regenerative medicine.
- Thanks to CellCAN, Canadian stakeholders work hand in hand.
- CellCAN facilitates collaboration and helps translate scientific discoveries into medical treatments.
- Beware of inaccurate information. Get your information from a reliable source.
- CellCAN is the most reliable, broad-based and consistent information provider in Canada.
- The public's participation is key to enable change.

7. MEANS

We will use various means to reach our goals and convey our messages to our audiences.

1. Dissemination to the public

1.1 Digital communications and social media

1.1.1 Website

CellCAN's current website offers information on our organization, events and the facilities in our network. It will evolve into a knowledge mobilization portal that will:

- Raise awareness about regenerative medicine
- Provide facts about research breakthroughs and new treatments
- Promote research projects and highlight scientific publications
- Offer tools to help reduce knowledge gaps
- Publish up-to-date educational materials (documents, videos)

1.1.2 Newsletter

We will use our e-newsletter to reach network members, collaborators, and partners. The content will range from stem cell news to research projects developed by CellCAN's partners and news from CellCAN.

1.1.3 Social media

Social media such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are excellent vehicles to reach various target audiences. We have developed a plan to guide our social media activities so far.

1.2 Webinars

We will produce several webinars for the scientific community and the lay public and make them available on our website.

1.3 Corporate video

We will produce a video that features CellCAN members (cell and tissue manufacturing facilities and core facilities), presents CellCAN's mission, and explains cell-based therapy, among other topics. This video will play at our booth during scientific events, be uploaded to our website, and be shown to our counterparts when needed.

1.4 Publications

1.4.1 Book

CellCAN has supported a book for lay public by Dr. Denis Claude Roy. Produced by renowned publisher Boréal, it will address the following topics related to stem cell therapy and regenerative medicine:

- the medical revolution brought about by this scientific discipline

- an overview of the national and international research scene
- the latest innovations
- ethical, moral and political issues

We will host a book launch and generate media coverage (see below). An English version of the book will be released at a later date.

1.4.2 Marker papers

CellCAN will support the production of scientific publications aimed at giving an in-depth overview on subjects relevant to CellCAN members.

1.4.3 Corporate brochure

We created the first version of our corporate brochure. Since this first version was produced under a tight deadline, we will continue to improve and update it and use it to showcase CellCAN during various events.

1.4.4 Information brochure for patients

The Stem Cell Network has produced a document about cell therapy and regenerative medicine. CellCAN intends to create short pamphlets based on this document. These pamphlets will cover specific themes and will be given away during events and made available on our website. The Stem Cell Network has granted us permission to use their original material.

1.5 Sponsoring

CellCAN will sponsor major scientific events related to stem cell research and regenerative medicine. Sponsoring opportunities will be analyzed case by case to evaluate the benefits that can be drawn from each one. For example, we will sponsor the Till & McCulloch Meeting at the end of October 2015.

1.6 Key scientific events

CellCAN will have a booth at various scientific events related to stem cell research and regenerative medicine. Our participation will be determined on a case-by-case basis to evaluate the benefits of each event.

1.7 ISCT 2018

CellCAN is competing to hold the ISCT 2018 in Montreal (in competition with Boston). ISCT is the biggest scientific event related to cell therapy and brings together international experts. This would put CellCAN on the world map.

2. Media relations

2.1. Proactive

To generate media coverage, we will proactively engage with science journalists from the general media and suggest stories and topics of interest. We will provide all the information they need as well as expert testimonials from our network.

2.2. Reactive

We will put every effort into answering all media questions so that journalists view CellCAN as a reliable and available source. In the case of a crisis or public issue that requires CellCAN to take a stance, our spokesperson will be briefed on the messages we want to convey and given a list of possible questions and answers.

3. Public engagement

3.1. Website

Our website will allow for the public to ask questions through a *Help desk*. Our team will ensure that the questions are answered and we will trace subjects of interest or misconceptions so that we can provide additional related information or raise awareness amongst our partners.

3.2. Data warehouse

CellCAN will develop a web-based data warehouse accessible from our website that will:

- Allow cell therapy centres to securely share information.
- Offer training opportunities for cell therapy centres.
- Facilitate communication and partnerships between experts and the scientific community across Canada.

3.3. Social media

Through social media (ours and that of our partners), we will perform targeted listening of the public comments. We will respond to their questions and use their feedback to improve our activities. Social media use will be crucial during specific events such as Stem Cell Awareness Day.

3.4. Webinars

We will organise a live webinar. This will allow the audience to ask questions to our webinar instructors. We will thus identify knowledge gaps and adapt our dissemination activities accordingly.

3.5. Scientific cafés

During these meetings, scientists will talk in general terms about stem cells and regenerative medicine in an informal and friendly atmosphere and the audience will be invited to ask questions and express their opinion. We will thus identify knowledge gaps and adapt our

dissemination activities accordingly. We will take advantage of these events to conduct surveys in order to assess the level of knowledge and understanding of the public (before and after the event, when possible).

3.6. Activities to launch CellCAN publications and other tools

We will organize various events around the launch of CellCAN-supported publications and tools. For example, CellCAN will launch the book by Dr. Denis Claude Roy. These events will be an excellent opportunity to engage with our target audiences.

3.7. Consultations on dissemination tools

We will develop a habit of consulting representatives of the lay public and of the scientific community at all stages of production of our dissemination tools. We will thus:

- identify their needs,
- confirm the ease of understanding of our materials,
- evaluate the impact of our tools.

3.8. Public engagement reporting

We will develop a public engagement reporting mechanism to collect data and monitor the impact of our activities.

3.9. Cell therapy awareness events

To interact with the general public (with the goal of raising awareness and educating them about stem cell therapy), we will organize an Information Day in the region of each CellCAN member (cell and tissue manufacturing facilities and core facilities). We will thus identify knowledge gaps and adapt our dissemination activities accordingly. We will take advantage of these Information Days to conduct surveys in order to assess the level of knowledge and understanding of the public (before and after the event, when possible).

3.10. Patient advocacy groups

CellCAN will provide experts to give presentations and discuss with patient advocacy groups. We have already engaged in similar activities with the Lymphoma & Leukemia Society of Canada as well as Myeloma Canada.

8. BUDGET

The budget will be established annually and included in our overall operations plan.