Introduction
Canadians’ red blood cell (RBC) folate has shifted towards high concentrations (>1500 nmol/l based on the 97th percentile of Americans post-fortification (NHANES)). Determinants of these high concentrations are poorly understood, though an association has been posited with high intakes of folate and adverse health outcomes. This research investigated determinants of high folate concentrations in Canadians.

Methods
RBC folate concentrations from the nationally representative Canadian Health Measures Survey were examined in participants aged 6–79 years (N=5248). The population was described using frequencies and percentages. Sociodemographic, behavioural and clinical determinants of high RBC folate concentrations were examined using univariate and separate multiple logistic regression models controlling for age and household income.

Results
The greatest proportion of high concentrations occurred in females (42.5%), higher age groups (6–11 years (36.4%), 12–19 years (25.6%), 20–39 years (32.9%), 40–59 years (44.5%), 60–79 years (53.6%) and higher income quartiles (33.5% (Q1), 37.6% (Q2), 41.6% (Q3), 46.6% (Q4)). Folic acid containing supplement users had a greater prevalence of high concentrations (62.8%) than non-users (57.2%). Prevalence of high concentrations climbed with increasing intake of fruit/vegetables (>3 times per day (46.8%)) and grain products (>3 times per day (45.5%)). Never smokers (39.5%) and former smokers (49.1%) had a greater prevalence of high concentrations than daily smokers (28.4%). Detailed regression results will be presented at the conference.

Conclusion
Determinants of high folate concentrations should be considered when refining folic acid supplementation and fortification policies. Future research on the relationship between high folate concentrations and health outcomes is warranted.

1.6 COHORT STUDIES AROUND THE WORLD: METHODOLOGIES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND INTEGRATION TO ADDRESS THE EMERGING GLOBAL EPIDEMIC OF CHRONIC DISEASES

Chair: Prof Donna Spiegelman, USA
Discussant: Prof. David Hunter, USA

The Shanghai Women’s and Men’s Health Studies

Rapid economic developments accompanied by environmental and lifestyle changes over the last 3 decades in China have resulted in dramatic increases in the incidence of chronic diseases such as cancer and cardiovascular disease. As a result, cancer and cardiovascular disease are two of the leading causes of death in China. This change in disease spectrum presents an enormous challenge to public health practitioners and policy makers in designing cost-efficient strategies for disease prevention. To identify reasons for the increased risk of chronic disease in China and investigate etiologic hypotheses that cannot be adequately evaluated in other populations, we launched the Shanghai Women’s Health Study in 1996 and the Shanghai Men’s Health Study in 2001. In collaboration with community health workers, the Shanghai Women’s Health Study recruited 75,049 women aged 40–70 from 7 communities in urban Shanghai between 1997 and 2000 with an overall response rate of 92%. Using a similar protocol, the Shanghai Men’s Health Study recruited 61,900 men aged 40–74 from 8 communities in Shanghai with a response rate of 75% for study participation. Biological samples were collected from the vast majority of study participants. All study participants were interviewed using a structured questionnaire to obtain information related to their usual dietary intake, physical activity, and other lifestyle factors. These two cohorts are being followed through a combination of biennial in-person surveys and record linkage with the Shanghai Cancer Registry and Shanghai Vital Statistics database. In addition to ascertaining health outcomes, we also obtain exposure data as part of the follow-up surveys.

The EsMaestras study is a prospective cohort study which enrolled female teachers 25-years and older from 12 states of Mexico including urban and rural schools. The main objective of the cohort is to evaluate life styles and environmental risk factors related to chronic diseases with major focus on breast and reproductive health.