Dr. Ruben Burgos-Vargas, one of the Canadian Rheumatology Association (CRA)/Mexican College of Rheumatology (MCR) Joint Congress’ keynote speakers, completed his medical degree at the Facultad de Medicina, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México in Mexico City and completed his post-graduate medical training at the following institutions: Hospital General de México and Facultad de Medicina, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, the Canadian Red Cross Memorial Hospital in Taplow, Berkshire and the Northwick Park Hospital, Clinical Research Centre in Harrow, Middlesex, U.K. Dr. Burgos-Vargas has focused his research on spondyloarthritis (SpA) and juvenile SpA for nearly 30 years. He and other collaborating investigators have also contributed to the characterization of clinical/therapeutic approaches of this group of diseases in children. Dr. Burgos-Vargas answered a few questions from The Journal of the Canadian Rheumatology Association (CRAJ) regarding his presentation (including any controversies that might be addressed), and what areas of research he would like to focus on in the future.

1. What areas of research are you presently focusing on? What areas would you like to focus on in the future? I have focused on SpA and juvenile SpA for nearly 30 years. I collaborate with other investigators in research areas, including rheumatoid arthritis (RA), gout and medical anthropology. Besides clinical and therapeutic approaches, we’ve also extended our research on genetic and pathogenetic aspects of such disorders. We have also started some relevant epidemiological aspects, as well as classification and diagnostic criteria. Our research group is also very interested in medical anthropology, and we have finished a collection of papers we are expecting to publish very soon.

2. In your presentation at the CRA/MCR Joint Congress what new information will be highlighted and why is this relevant to Canadian and Mexican rheumatologists who will be in attendance? My presentation will focus on the epidemiology and classification of SpA, an important group of chronic, potentially disabling diseases, in Canada and Mexico. Clinical presentation may be different among the two countries, but their classification, diagnosis, and treatment are very similar. Canadian and Mexican specialists in SpA share some thoughts about the role of new classification criteria and, therefore, issue common agreements and recommendations about them.

3. Will any controversies be addressed in your presentation? If so, what are they? Some controversies that may be addressed include the role of new classification criteria and the two costly approaches to this disease examined in community studies.

4. Why have you chosen to present this subject? The classification and epidemiology of SpA is certainly a hot topic, and we are trying to learn and evaluate their usefulness in different countries.

5. As you know, this is the second CRA/MCR Joint Congress. What do you think are the positive contributions of an international conference such as this? Direct and personal contact with investigators from different countries help to understand the way we work, investigate, approach problems and resolve them with people interested in the same areas from each country. More importantly, we may plan collaborative projects and the results may be beneficial to Canadian and Mexican rheumatologists. Further, but no less important, is the social aspect of the meeting.

Ruben Burgos-Vargas, MD  
Medical Sciences Investigator,  
Department of Rheumatology,  
Hospital General de México  
Professor of Medicine,  
Facultad de Medicina,  
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México  
Mexico City, Mexico