

Laurentian Conference of Rheumatology

By Carol Yeadon, MD, FRCPC

The 42nd edition of the Laurentian Conference of Rheumatology showed that being 40 or so allows maturity and novelty to co-exist well. More than 80 people followed in the footsteps of the conference's creators and pioneers, leaving the city behind and heading for the Laurentian hills to broaden their scientific and professional knowledge, exchange ideas, and meet and greet people with shared interests.

In the Laurentians, Mother Nature displayed her lovely pale green colors, announcing the arrival of a long-awaited spring. The inaugural poster session featured enthusiastic, bright and productive young investigators whose studies helped define the psychosocial impacts of scleroderma, the effects of antiphospholipid antibodies, and processes leading to osteoarthritis (OA). This format proved ideal to promoting the exchange of ideas and stimulating discussion, lubricated by beer or a glass of wine.

Throughout the conference, investigators and clinicians, young and old, presented findings with the potential to improve clinical skills; these included the confirmation of Lyme disease's arrival in Quebec and that hemochromatosis can present with hindfoot arthritis.



(Left to right): Dr. Jean-Pierre Raynaud, Dr. Carol Yeadon, Dr. Simon Carrette and Dr. Boulos Haraoui. Photo courtesy of Dr. Frédéric Massicotte.

Guest speaker Professor Bernard Combe, of Montpellier, France, illuminated the elaborate process which resulted in the recent collaborative publication of the American College of Rheumatology (ACR)/European League Against Rheumatism (EULAR) Classification Criteria for Rheumatoid Arthritis. Professor Combe argued in favor of early, effective disease control. As President of the Société française de rhumatologie, he invited his Québécois cousins to increase their participation in the Society's meetings.

From the University of Maryland, Dr. Marc Hochberg, editor of the classic *Rheumatology* textbook, ably demonstrated how OA is a major disease threat to international health and wealth. Furthermore, although we have slowly and laboriously gained knowledge, he emphasized the need for further understanding before we have OA treatments as effective as those for other inflammatory arthropathies.

Québec City's beloved son and pillar of the Toronto rheumatology field, Dr. Simon Carrette gave a truly state of the art talk on the management of antineutrophil cytoplasmic antibodies (ANCA)-associated vasculitis. The seven principles he put forth and admirably defended could well become the subject's "Seven Pillars of Wisdom."

The award dinner was a convivial occasion; honors went to Dr. Hochberg, recipient of the Roger-Demers Award, and Dr. Carrette, who received the Jeff Shiroky Award. Our esteemed colleague, Dr. Jiri Krasny, was the recipient of the Marie-Thérèse Fortin Award for his outstanding professional and human qualities. On Saturday, the mountains became greener under spring rain as attendees bade one another "au revoir" until next year's "rendez-vous."

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