

AHPA in Cancun: Report

By Marlene Thompson, BScPT, BSc

The Arthritis Health Professions Association (AHPA) was once again pleased to join the Canadian Rheumatology Association (CRA) in our Annual Scientific Conference and meeting. Sunny Cancun was a beautiful destination to host our Annual General Meeting, as well as our 3rd annual pre-course for arthritis health professionals. This year's pre-course was on lupus and once again we "sold out" of space and bursaries for the course. It was well-attended, with an excellent lineup of speakers including Drs. Janet Pope, Ken Blocka, Paul Fortin, Marvin Fritzlter; registered nurses Carolyn Neville and Anne Cymet; and Tammy Rice (an occupational therapist) and Donna Tierney (a physiotherapist).

Awards for the best allied health abstracts submitted to the conference were presented during the CRA's award banquet. The Carolyn Thomas Award, given to the first author of the best scientific abstract, was established in honor of Carolyn Thomas, a founding member of the AHPA. This year, it was awarded to Kelly Warmington for her research entitled "Development, evaluation and implementation of a successful interprofessional education program for adults with inflammatory arthritis."

The Special Interest Abstract Award was established by AHPA to recognize an individual whose work contributes to the knowledge for arthritis treatment and enhances patient care, but does not fit traditional models of research. This year's recipient was Mary Ellen Marcon for her project "Telemedicine as a tool assisting therapists to deliver arthritis care in remote/rural communities."

Through the generous support of The Arthritis Society (TAS), AHPA also awarded a \$5,000 grant for arthritis

health professional research. Michael Hunt received this grant for his research on "The immediate and short-term biomechanical and symptomatic effects of shock absorbing shoe insoles in individuals with varus gonarthrosis."

In addition to our research awards, we also presented a clinical award to recognize AHPA members who have designed and implemented an innovative clinical project or related initiative that benefits the lives of Canadians living with arthritis. This year's winners were Tammy Rice and Donna Tierney for the Beryl and Richard Ivey Rheumatology Scleroderma Day Program at St. Joseph's Hospital in London, Ontario.

The Extraordinary Service Award recognizes contributions an AHPA board member has made in advancing the mission, vision and goals of our organization. Terri Lupton has been instrumental in creating a national presence for AHPA; she has worked hard to create a diverse organization and, as such, has recruited many nurses to join AHPA. Terri has also helped to attain sponsorship for the running of our pre-course, bursary program and scholarship programs. She remains the AHPA Sponsorship and Marketing Chair.

The Lifetime Achievement Award was given to Sydney (Lineker) Brooks. As a physiotherapist, Sydney has devoted her entire career to the management of clients with arthritis—through direct clinical treatment, management and mentoring of other staff—and ultimately to research activities related to the management of clients with arthritis. Her 29-year employment with TAS has seen an evolution from a staff employee to her present role as Director of Research.

Sydney's research interests led to her involvement with the Arthritis Community Research and Evaluation Unit



Kelly Warmington, Carolyn Thomas Award



Mary Ellen Marcon, Special Interest Abstract Award



Terri Lupton, Extraordinary Service Award



Donna Tierney and Tammy Rice, Clinical Innovation Award



Sydney (Lineker) Brooks, Lifetime Achievement Award

(ACREU). As her research abilities grew, so did her opportunities to provide her peers with valuable educational information. She has had several opportunities to deliver poster presentations and present podium sessions at numerous conferences; with her Masters project, Sydney developed an outcome measure (Knowledge Questionnaire), which is used in the management of clients with rheumatoid arthritis. Most recently, Sydney earned her PhD, with her reviewers agreeing that she has contributed valuable new knowledge to the field of rheumatology. Sydney's work has also produced the landmark program Getting a Grip on Arthritis (GRIP). To date, more than 900 Canadian primary-care providers have graduated from GRIP, helping TAS forward a valuable strategy to improve care for people with arthritis, and addressing the need to improve diagnosis and care. Sydney's own PhD research has produced two published papers, with another submitted, but the total number of papers arising from the GRIP project is far greater. Sydney has been the nexus and the coordinator for all of this work.

One of a group of clinicians with a vision to create a platform for people interested in advancing shared knowledge related to arthritis management, Sydney became one of the original members of AHPA. She volunteered to actively participate in the development of the association, holding numerous positions within the organization and partici-

pating in its evolution to become the national organization that it is today.

Congratulations to all of our AHPA award winners! I would also like to say a special thank you to the members of the board who made this meeting possible: Kathy Drouin (Education Chair), Karen Gordon (Communications Chair), Leslie Soever (Professional and Career Development Chair), Terri Lupton (Sponsorship and Marketing Chair), Lorna Bain (Member Services Chair), Janet Jeffrey (Research Chair), Yvonne Tobin (Executive Provincial Representative), Jane Cottrell (Treasurer) and Jennifer Burt (President Elect).

I would like to give a warm welcome to our incoming president Jennifer Burt. Jennifer is a physiotherapist from Newfoundland working at St. Clare's Hospital in St. John's on the Rheumatology Outpatients Service; she has been with AHPA since 2005.

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In Brief

Congratulations to Dr. Robert Inman, who has accepted the position of Deputy Physician-in-Chief for Research in the Department of Medicine at the University Health Network (UHN) at the University of Toronto.

Dr. Inman is currently Director of the Arthritis Center of Excellence at UHN and Director of the

Spondylitis Program at Toronto Western Hospital. He is Chair of the Research Committee of the UHN Arthritis Program. He has previously served as Departmental Division Director of Rheumatology at the University of Toronto, and was Chief of Rheumatology at UHN from 1991 to 1998.