

# Pearls in Rheumatology: A Review

By Ricardo A. Cartagena, MD, FRCPC

“Viva Mejico!” was the repeated roar of the Mexican public at the peak of their excitement while watching the exquisitely choreographed spectacle describing their history and costumes, region by region, at the Xcaret theme park. My accompanying family thought that the place was beautiful and that Mexico had many good things to offer visitors. The state-of-the-art presentations included in the scientific program provided a similar impression at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mexican-Canadian Congress of Rheumatology, held from February 11 to 15, 2011. I was also quite happy with the four cases which were very well “dissected” during the two days of the “Pearls in Rheumatology” sessions. I had the opportunity to co-chair these sessions with my Mexican colleague, Dr. Leonor Adriana Barile Fabris.

The Canadian participation had begun one year earlier when the Scientific Committee of the Canadian Rheumatology Association (CRA) decided to navigate relatively uncharted waters; proposed was an educational tool allowing the Canadian community of rheumatologists the opportunity to participate to the fullest extent. We suggested a format of a clinical case presentation that included the name of the topic, learning objectives, relevant history, and physical exam and laboratory results. The presenter would ask three multiple-choice questions and attendees would answer with the audience response system (ARS; attendees select their answers with a keypad). After briefly discussing the results from the quick survey, the presenters would then explain the reason for the correct answer and state the key message(s) taken from the clinical case in discussion.

After launching a few announcements, we got several clinical cases from our Canadian colleagues. This was followed by a period of intense and, at times, tough competition, but eventually a jury of adjudicators from the CRA selected the winners who represented us in Cancun. Criteria used for selection were originality, clarity and clinical value. The winners were two senior rheumatologists from eastern and western Canada, respectively, and two very bright trainees, one a rheumatology fellow from the University of Ottawa and the other a chief medical resident from the University of Western Ontario. The winning cases were “Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension with Adult Still’s Disease” by Dr. Peter Docherty; “Lumps in

Scars” by Dr. Robert Offer; “Lupus Profundus with Macrophage Activating Syndrome” by Dr. Nataliya Milman; and “H1N1 with Microscopic Polyangiitis” by Dr. Umjeet Jolly. Their performances were first-class! In addition to complying with the above format, they also presented a relevant literature review, crystallizing the goals the organizers had intended in the first place.

Our Mexican colleagues did a similarly excellent job presenting cases of intestinal vasculitis as the initial manifestation of systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), contraceptive prescription in SLE, autoimmune/inflammatory syndrome induced by adjuvants (ASIA) and neuropsychiatric lupus.

Of course, nothing like this could ever happen without countless hours of masterful work put in behind the scenes by real people doing their very best. Thank you to Dr. Glen Thomson, the Scientific Committee of the CRA, Dr. Michel Zummer and the CRA Executive, Christine Charnock, and all those who contributed in such a special way.

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