

Therapeutics Committee

By Shahin Jamal, BScPT, MD, FRCPC, MSc

The Canadian Rheumatology Association (CRA) Therapeutics Committee has had another productive year under the leadership of Drs. Vivian Bykerk and Philip Baer. Although they have stepped down as co-chairs of the committee, they will remain actively involved. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their years of hard work and dedication.

The new Canadian guidelines for the management of rheumatoid arthritis, funded by a Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) grant, have been completed and will be published in *The Journal of Rheumatology* later on this year. The next step is a knowledge-translation plan to ensure dissemination and implementation of these guidelines. To this end, the Therapeutics Committee is working with the CRA Education and Access to Care Committees to facilitate the uptake of recommendations clinically and ensure access to appropriate medications provincially. The recommendations will also be presented at Canadian regional meetings in the coming months.

A needs assessment was conducted in the fall of 2010 which supported the development of clinical practice guidelines for the management of systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). This will become particularly important as new medications are available on the market. Dr. Stephanie Keeling will be leading this initiative over the coming years.

There has also been interest in the development of a consensus statement on the management of gout, as well as the development of a central reference site for the use of biological therapies in orphan diseases. The Therapeutics Committee will be working with the Website Committee in facilitating this. If there is anyone who would like to participate in any of the above initiatives, or who has proposals for future initiatives, please feel free to contact me by email at shahin.jamal@vch.ca.

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Website Committee

By Mark Matsos, MD, FRCPC

The 2011 Canadian Rheumatology Association (CRA) executive retreat provided an ideal opportunity for the Website Committee to reflect on the success of the website (www.rheum.ca) and plan the future of our online rheumatology community.

The national website continues to be a popular draw for members coast to coast—a recent analysis of our web traffic showed that the website is currently generating between 80,000 to 90,000 hits on an annual basis. Members accessing the website are looking for the latest news on upcoming events, utilizing the website's search features to find colleagues, and learning about the latest and greatest in rheumatology with regularly updated continuing medical education (CME) content. Trainees are also navigating to the website searching for opportunities to learn more about our great specialty. The CRA summer studentship program and our mentorship postings are frequent hits for students and residents looking to join the next generation of rheumatologists!

Over the next several months, the website will be undergoing revision to meet the increasing demands for online

services. We hope to offer a fresh appearance and enhance the overall functionality so that version 2.0 of www.rheum.ca will serve as an online portal for everything rheumatology. This will include offering online renewal of annual membership, online registration for the annual general meeting, new opportunities for CME, and ongoing content for trainees keen on pursuing a career in rheumatology.

Thanks to our industry partners who continue to support the ongoing activities of the website, and to our webmaster Elisia Teixeira who continues to work tirelessly “behind the screen.” A special thank you to Dr. Andy Thompson who, after many dedicated years of service, has handed over the reigns of the website and its committee. I look forward to following in his footsteps and exploring the many opportunities ahead.

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