

Reflections on the CRA's Summer Studentship Program

There is a high demand for new rheumatologists in Canada. The Canadian Rheumatology Association (CRA) Summer Studentship programs are an excellent way for medical students to garner experience and interest in our important subspecialty. For further information about these Summer Studentship programs, please visit the CRA at www.rheum.ca.

Reflections: Dr. Claire Barber.

The year was 2002-2003 and I was a brand new fresh-faced medical student who, prior to medical school, had not even heard the word "rheumatology". The stars aligned and my first teaching block was the musculoskeletal (MSK) block. Dr. Dianne Mosher was the preceptor for my group and she suggested we all apply for the Canadian Rheumatology Association (CRA) Summer Studentship Program. I thought spending more time figuring out what type of doctor I wanted to be and learning more about this mysterious specialty called rheumatology sounded like a grand idea for a summer job. I applied and I was successful. Little did I know that the summer of 2003 would determine my future career path! That summer, I worked with Dr. Mosher in her office and also with the other wonderful rheumatologists in the division of rheumatology in Halifax, including Dr. John Hanly, who became a research mentor. The three internal medicine residents working on the service that summer all went into rheumatology the following year and are now practicing across the country. In short, I had fabulous mentorship and a wonderful clinical experience.

The following summer I continued to work with Dr. Hanly on a research project and presented it at the first Canadian-Mexican Rheumatology Congress in Acapulco. I was sold on a career in rheumatology! I completed my internal medicine training at Dalhousie between 2006 and 2009 and then did my rheumatology training in Toronto, where I was mentored by Dr. Paul R. Fortin and I became interested in clinical epidemiology. Mid-way through my last year of training in Toronto, I received an email from Dr. Mosher, who had moved to Calgary and was Division Head of rheumatology at the University of Calgary.

She suggested I come out for a visit to see their division. In the summer of 2011, I made the move to Calgary where I am pursuing a Master's degree in Clinical Epidemiology with funding from the UCB-CRA-TAS rheumatology fellowship program.

I want to thank the CRA for giving me the opportunity to do a summer studentship as it introduced me to the world of rheumatology and many wonderful mentors across the country who have guided me over the years. I think it is a very valuable program. Through my training I have met several other CRA summer students who have also become rheumatologists. I hope to have my own CRA summer student soon!

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Dr. Barber, flanked by some of her colleagues at the first Mexican-Canadian Rheumatology Congress, in Acapulco (from left to right: Dr. Evelyn Sutton, Dr. Andy Thompson, Dr. Jamie Henderson, Dr. Claire Barber, and Dr. Gunnar Kraag).