

Flying With the Eagles

I was visiting an ex-University of Manitoba emergency-physician acquaintance of mine in Mombassa, Africa more than 20 years ago. He counseled my wife (Janine) and I not to get sick in Kenya, or at least not outside a major city where there would be no private hospitals. The chronic shortage of physicians was “resolved,” in part, by training nurses to be the primary-care providers. As long as the patient was not seriously ill, he said this system worked; however, if the patient was seriously ill, he had his misgivings. Janine and I, despite one rather uncomfortable night spent with the African version of Montezuma’s Revenge, never had the opportunity to test his hypothesis, thank goodness.

This issue of the *CRAJ* focuses on rheumatology education for primary-care providers (pages 4-5). The shortfall in rheumatologists in many regions of Canada will not be resolved in the foreseeable future and it is hoped that more primary-care resources will recognize true arthritis in the haystack of musculoskeletal diseases, which will lead to earlier diagnosis and treatment. Too often, failure of therapy reflects an incorrect diagnosis with consequent improper management. The art and skills required for diagnosis must be taught and then practiced over years. Those with the most experience are steadily departing our profession. The results from the Canadian Rheumatology Association (CRA) Needs Assessment (page 14) again tell us that a sizable number of rheumatologists will be hanging up their stethoscopes within five years. Will there be a CRA strategy to keep senior rheumatologists practicing longer as the CRA hopes to encourage young rheumatologists into this intellectually stimulating and financially



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challenging specialty? The report on the CRA Executive Retreat (page 12) covers the issues discussed by the new executive under President Michel Zummer. Dr. Zummer’s thoughts are also shared with us in this issue (page 6).

Changes in specialty certification will impact rheumatology. It is uncertain whether certification in rheumatology without the general medical certification will help or hinder recruitment. The report from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) covers the issues facing its rheumatology specialty committee (page 15).

The Calgary Flames may have missed the Stanley Cup by a goal, but that didn’t stop Steve Edworthy’s Alberta report (page 18)! But over at McMaster University, they believe that Canada’s team is the Tiger Cats! Rick Adachi brings us all the Hamilton news that’s fit to print (page 19).

The best and brightest award-winning investigators’ interviews are featured in Northern (High)Lights (pages 7 and 11). If these don’t stimulate you to get up from your deck chair as you relax at the cottage or around the pool, then perhaps the Fickle Finger of Fame Award (page 10) will provide you encouragement to be all that you can be. Despite all the work, rheumatologists are an interesting—although quiet—bunch. This is the time to have your story told. Send us a note about what interesting things you have done or are doing. As for me, I will be flying with the Eagles (a soccer club for 12-year-old’s).

Have a great summer and remember the sunscreen.

Glen Thomson
Editor-in-Chief, *CRAJ*

*Ian's advice to his father:
"Don't give up your
day job."*

