

News from the Society of Atlantic Rheumatologists: Atlantic Update 2013

By Sylvie Ouellette, MD, FRCPC

Thirty years: some would call this a generation, while others would argue that this is only a short time. But 30 years ago, in a windowless room at the Victoria General Hospital in Halifax, the first meeting of the Society of Atlantic Rheumatologists (SOAR) was held. Much has changed since that time in the practice of rheumatology and, sadly, several of those initial members have passed away. What has not changed, however, is the enthusiasm that brings our small group together on an annual basis.

It is with these memories in mind that we came together again on PEI's north shore from June 21-23, 2013 to celebrate 30 years of collegiality and cooperation amongst Atlantic rheumatologists. The weather was fine (for a change), the lobster sweet, and the golf? Best not to say (what happens on the course stays on the course). On Saturday night there was musical entertainment with Andrew Creegan, for those intrepid few who chose the bar instead of the hockey game.

This year's invited speakers included Dr. Susan Manzi and Dr. John Stone. Dr. Manzi spoke about therapeutic options in systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), along with the tribulations of trials in this field, followed by a thought-provoking presentation on outcomes in SLE and the concerns about management of comorbidities. Dr. Stone provided an update on the management of vasculitis and the broadening role of rituximab. He also provided updated information on IgG4-related disease and potential biomarkers. Spoiler alert: think plasmablasts and not IgG4. There were also case presentations by Dr. Bianca Lang, Dr. Alexa Smith, and myself.

The 2013 meeting gave us an opportunity to reflect on SOAR's past, and to consider its future. It therefore seemed only fitting that an original member attended with his first granddaughter (the first SOAR grandchild!). We took this opportunity to remember Dr. David Hawkins by establishing a named lectureship in his honour.

Dr. Hawkins, along with Dr. Jack Woodbury, were instrumental in bringing the original SOAR group together. Rooted in their pioneering efforts, we look forward to the next 30 years of meetings!

Dr. John Hanly has agreed to take over the reigns as president of SOAR for the next two years. I wish him every success.



Atlantic rheumatologists, guests, and honorary members, a plate of fresh lobster!

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