

## CIORA Committee

By Boulos Haraoui, MD, FRCPC

The Canadian Initiative in Outcomes in Rheumatology Care (CIORA) has matured since its inception in 2006, when Abbott Canada (now AbbVie)

pledged to support CRA members in the pursuit and conduct of clinically relevant research projects which would not be otherwise funded by major granting agencies.

After three years with Abbott as the sole supporter and more than \$1 million of funded studies, all the major pharmaceutical companies were invited to participate, expanding the scope of funded research. The vast majority realized the importance of such an initiative and pledged to support the growth of CIORA. Currently, we receive funding from AbbVie, Amgen, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Janssen, Pfizer, Roche, and UCB.

Two years ago a major change occurred when CIORA ceased to function as an independent entity and became an integral part of the CRA, established as a committee responsible for advancing rheumatology clinical research in Canada.

Since the beginning, the grant review process was conducted by an independent panel of reviewers chaired by Dr. John Esdaile. The highest standards were applied; I would like to especially thank John and the many reviewers over the years who have volunteered their time and expertise. At the last round in the fall of 2012, six one-year grants and three two-year grants were funded, totaling \$715,892!



This makes CIORA the third-largest arthritis-research funding agency in Canada.

CIORA has recently created the CRA-The Arthritis Society (TAS)

Clinician Investigator Award, to be managed by TAS. The first recipient is Dr. Cheryl Barnabe, for her contributions to rheumatology research. This is an investment in future leaders in clinical research in rheumatology.

The next call for grant applications will be conducted in the spring of 2014. For more information about CIORA and the grant application process, you can visit the CRA website at [rheum.ca](http://rheum.ca). You can also view posters and publications from past funded projects.

I would like also to thank the steering committee of CIORA for their guidance: Dr. Carter Thorne, Dr. Alfred Cividino, Dr. Jamie Henderson, Dr. Janet Pope, Dr. Michel Zimmer, Dr. Maggie Larché, and Dr. Regina Gjevrev, as well as Virginia Hopkins and Christine Charnock for their invaluable administrative skills in the management of CIORA.

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## Education Committee

By Christopher Penney, MD, FRCPC

The CRA became an accreditor of continued professional development (CPD) for the Royal College in 2011. We will be re-applying for accreditor status over the course of 2014. This is a very necessary but time-consuming and expensive process.

During 2013, the CPD subcommittee provided accreditation reviews for the CRA Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) as well as for the Society of Atlantic Rheumatologists (SOAR), the Ontario Rheumatology Association (ORA), the

Sjogren's Society, and Credit Valley Rheumatology. Online programs were co-developed with mdBriefcase on clinical trial appraisal, the CRA RA guidelines, and current trends in RA. At the ASM this year, a workshop on accreditation was held by the Royal College and attended by members of the CRA Education Committee.

As of the fall of 2013, the Education section of the CRA website is now open. This is a work in progress; if you have any educational materials that you wish to share with

your colleagues nationally, please contact Christine Charnock at [christine@rheum.ca](mailto:christine@rheum.ca).

The CRA has established a Practice Reflection Award to encourage CRA members to develop CPD self-assessment/practice reflection programs that can be used to improve rheumatology practice in Canada. If you are interested in applying for the Award, please go to the Awards section on the CRA website for further information ([www.rheum.ca/en/the\\_cra/Awards](http://www.rheum.ca/en/the_cra/Awards)).

The Patient Partners In Arthritis subcommittee continues to search for a way to fund Patient Partners at the national level. The CRA turned down our request for support. We are currently negotiating with The Arthritis Society (TAS). If you have any suggestions, please contact me at [penney@ucalgary.ca](mailto:penney@ucalgary.ca).

We welcome any CRA member with a special interest in CPD or other aspects of rheumatology education to join the committee. Dr. Jodie Reis, Dr. Aurore Fifi-Mah, and Dr. Dharini Mahendira have joined us this past year. We especially need members from Quebec. The CRA will pay your out of pocket expenses for training if you choose to become an accreditation reviewer. If you have a special interest in undergraduate or postgraduate education, you can join the CanREAL subcommittee. Please email me for further information.

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Calgary, Alberta*

## Therapeutics Committee

By Shahin Jamal, BScPT, MD, FRCPC, MSc

The CRA's Therapeutics Committee has had another busy and productive year. We have been actively involved in the development of guidelines and consensus statements across therapeutic areas. We currently have groups working on dissemination and translation of rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and fibromyalgia (FM) guidelines, development of consensus statements for vasculitis and systemic lupus, and updates on guidelines for management of spondyloarthropathies. There is also discussion on the development of Canadian guidelines for pregnancy in rheumatic diseases and osteoarthritis (OA). Through the Therapeutics Committee, the various groups have been able to work together to share resources, methodology, and manpower. In September 2013, we held a successful stakeholders meeting to discuss development of a unified framework for disseminating and measuring uptake of guidelines in rheumatology; this was funded by a Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) small-group-meeting grant and chaired by Dr. Claire Bombardier. We have also approached expert Canadian epidemiologists from McMaster University to assist in the development of unified guideline development methodology.

The CRA RA guidelines were published in the *Journal of Rheumatology (JRheum)* in August 2012. These are currently in the process of translation into French. An E-Recommendations Program has now been developed in

conjunction with mdBriefcase. There are also multiple dissemination activities underway including a question-and-answer series in the *CRAJ*. A slide deck is available through the CRA to any individuals interested in presenting the guidelines to their local colleagues.

The Canadian Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE) Consensus Working Group had their first face-to-face meeting following the CRA Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) in Ottawa in February 2013; this too was funded by a CIHR small-meeting grant. The meeting was very successful and brought together rheumatologists and lupologists from across Canada. Priority topics and questions were identified based on a needs assessment that was distributed to the CRA membership in December 2012. The SLE Working Group is now conducting a systematic literature review, hoping to be completed in early 2014. With this, they will develop a Canadian Consensus statement on SLE management.

The Canadian Vasculitis Research Network (CANVASC) is working on recommendations for the management of anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibody (ANCA)-associated vasculitis. A needs assessment of the CRA membership was completed in spring 2013, followed by a systematic literature review and production of a first two drafts of recommendations. The final draft, with involvement of a broad spectrum of specialists, should be completed by the second quarter of 2014.