

## Guidelines Committee: Update 2015

By Shahin Jamal, BScPT, MD, FRCPC, MSc

Over the past few years, the CRA Therapeutics Committee has been very active with clinical practice guidelines. As a result, in 2014, the CRA Guidelines Committee was founded to focus specifically on clinical practice guidelines, consensus statements, and disease-management-related position statements. We have been working with Dr. Peter Tugwell and a group at McMaster University to streamline the guideline development process and ensure our methodology is up to date.

Over the past year, our Committee has been very active across many diseases and management spectrums. In the spring, the 2014 Update of the CRA/SPARCC Treatment Recommendations for the Management of Spondyloarthritis (SpA) were published in two parts in the *Journal of Rheumatology*.<sup>1,2</sup> The CanVasc Recommendations for the management of anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibody (ANCA)-associated vasculitides were accepted for publication in the *Journal of Rheumatology* and published in October 2015. These were both huge undertakings and I commend Dr. Sherry Rohekar, Dr. Christian Pagnoux, and their groups on their hard work and perseverance. Dr. Stephanie Keeling continues to lead a group of Canadian lupologists towards the development of management guidelines for lupus. There was meeting in September 2015 in Toronto, and we are excited to see their findings published within the coming year. The pediatric section of the CRA has developed a Canadian position statement on management of juvenile arthritis. This too will be submitted for publication soon.

Dr. Mary-Ann Fitzcharles has done an excellent job advocating and educating on the use of medicinal marijuana in rheumatic diseases. In the summer of 2014, she published data from a survey of CRA members detailing rheumatologists' lack of confidence with prescribing cannabinoids.<sup>3</sup> This was followed up in January 2015 with an editorial on expanding medicinal marijuana access in Canada for rheumatic disease.<sup>4</sup> We have recently submitted a systematic review of randomized controlled trials of the efficacy, tolerability, and safety of cannabinoid treatments in the rheumatic diseases. This will hopefully be published in *Arthritis Care and Research* in the coming months.

Subsequent entry biologics (SEBs) have arrived in Canada and the CRA has had some involvement in this process. We submitted a position statement to Health

Canada in fall 2014, and worked with a group of pharmacology colleagues to disseminate and publish on Canadian rheumatologist attitudes towards SEBs.<sup>5</sup> Work in this area continues, and more information can be found at [www.rheum.ca/en/the\\_cra/drug\\_updates](http://www.rheum.ca/en/the_cra/drug_updates).

We have many projects ongoing: There was a needs assessment circulated to the CRA membership over the summer, focused on management of giant cell arteritis. In the coming months, a similar needs assessments will be distributed on management of inflammatory arthritis in pregnancy; another needs assessment on management of Takayasu's arteritis (TAK) was recently completed. Based on the results, researchers will be developing clinical practice guidelines in these areas. The groups who developed the rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and fibromyalgia guidelines published in 2011 will be evaluating uptake of these guidelines and working on updates for the future.

Finally, the CRA has supported the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR)-Institute of Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis (IMHA) James Lind Alliance (JLA) which is looking at priority-setting in fibromyalgia. There has been a recent survey of our membership to determine the top-10 unanswered research questions in the management of adult fibromyalgia. This priority-setting exercise could be used in other areas of research by the major research funding charities.

I have had the great privilege of chairing the Therapeutics (and now Guidelines) Committee since 2011. I will be stepping down in February 2016 and Dr. Glen Hazlewood will be taking over. I have no doubt that he will do an excellent job! We are very lucky to have such enthusiastic colleagues that continue working hard to improve rheumatology in Canada. I would like to thank all of the passionate members of my Committee and the CRA Board for their time, expertise, support, and dedication. I would particularly like to thank Christine Charnock, without whom none of us could do what we do.

### References

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## Can You Tell Me What CanREAL Really Is?

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**Can What?** CanREAL stands for Canadian Rheumatology Education and Learning. This subcommittee of the CRA Education Committee was founded on the premise of “promoting scholarship in rheumatology education.” About 15 years ago, Dr. Lori Albert originally convened a small nucleus of educators as an informal group. At the 2012 CRA Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM), the group met and formed this working group subcommittee. At the 2013 CRA ASM, the CRA provided official subcommittee status.

What do we do? **The purpose of CanREAL is to:**

- Promote exchange of ideas and best practices for rheumatology education at the undergraduate and postgraduate level.
- Promote scholarship in rheumatology education in Canada.

**Can Who?** The CanREAL membership structure is an open committee membership of individuals interested in undergraduate and post-graduate medical education. A special welcome is extended to rheumatology trainees considering a career in medical education. Those interested in getting involved can contact:

- Dr. Raheem B. Kherani, Chair: [raheem.b.kherani@gmail.com](mailto:raheem.b.kherani@gmail.com)
- Dr. Susan Humphrey-Murto, Vice-Chair: [shumphrey-murtomd@toh.on.ca](mailto:shumphrey-murtomd@toh.on.ca)
- Dr. Christopher Penney, Secretary and Chair, CRA Education Committee: [penney@ucalgary.ca](mailto:penney@ucalgary.ca)

**Can When and Where?** Face-to-face meetings are held at the CRA ASM each year. Teleconferences have been set up as needed throughout the year with the support of the CRA.

**Can Why?** CanREAL provides a national forum for collaboration in rheumatology education, innovation, and scholarship. Early collaborations are developing with shared projects and connections that the CRA fosters through support of organizations such as CanREAL. There

have been discussions reviewing a potential new award, entitled the *Medical Education Innovation Project Award* to complement the recently developed *Practice Reflection Award*. Future directions include ongoing round-table discussions amongst rheumatology educators nationally to share best practices and innovations, and to provide a platform for the development of scholarship across institutions. Through collaborations within the CRA there is opportunity for the development of more web resources and enhancing the educational delivery of the CRA ASM.

Can **YOU** engage with medical education in rheumatology nationally? Absolutely. Join us for the next CanREAL meeting in Lake Louise.

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