
Spreading the Word About Rheumatology at the Ontario Medical Students Weekend (OMSW)

By Jane Purvis, MD, FRCPC

The Ontario Rheumatology Association (ORA) Manpower Committee and the CRA human resources program, Training the Rheumatologists of Tomorrow (TROT), have been working together in various ways to increase the visibility of rheumatology to first-year medical students. Our most impactful activity thus far has been our participation at the Ontario Medical Students Weekend (OMSW). This annual event is held in one of the six medical school cities, and this year's event took place in London, Ontario, on October 14-15, 2016.

The ORA and CRA had a booth in the Medical Expo room and we greeted 550 first-year medical students in just one day! Students had the opportunity to speak to a rheumatologist to learn what rheumatology is all about and to try on gloves that simulate deforming rheumatoid arthritis. The students were given information on the CRA Summer Studentship opportunity, and they received information on how to contact the program directors at each of the medical schools, so they could pursue electives if desired. The #MakeRheum posters were on display as well as the now famous *RheumCareer* pens. We had the busiest booth in the room and were the only medical subspecialty in attendance. This continues to be a valuable opportunity to reach medical students early in their careers, so that rheumatology can



be considered as the excellent career choice that we all know it to be.

Each year, a survey has been conducted to gauge the impact of the booth on the students who visit. The coordinator of the #MakeRheum campaign approached 30 students during the day to fill in a questionnaire regarding their experience. Both years the data have been striking!

This year, nine of 30 had heard about the subspecialty, and all of these students are considering an experience in rheumatology. A further 21 had not heard of rheumatology but, after visiting the booth, 18 said that they

would consider pursuing an experience in rheumatology; two were undecided; and one indicated that he/she would not ("just would like some exposure now. My interest has been piqued"). That is, 90% of the undergraduate medical students who had a chance to hear about rheumatology from a passionate rheumatologist want an experience in rheumatology. We need to consider how to build capacity to satisfy this demand!

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What the Heck is a Hackathon? (Continued from page 8)

The Bottom Line

If someone invites you to a hackathon, say yes! It will be a lot of fun.

Thanks to Arthritis Consumer Experts for setting the hackathon stage by the consumer-patient perspective on the RA journey and to Eli Lilly Canada for supporting and driving this idea forward.

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