

The CRA Practice Reflection Award: Dr. May Choi

SILVER

Patient Education is Truly a Joint Effort!

Patient education is an important part of fostering strong patient-physician relationships and improving treatment compliance. Reflecting upon my rheumatology fellowship, I realized that I enjoyed teaching patients about their arthritis; however, I often felt there was limited time in clinic, and that patients would benefit greatly from an interdisciplinary approach. Therefore, a new multidisciplinary patient education program called “It’s a Joint Effort” was created to bridge gaps in patients’ understanding of their disease. This program was created by myself along with a social worker (Jennifer Nguyen), physiotherapist (Carolyn Johns), clinical pharmacist (Alex Charlton), PharmD student (Sharon Falk), and nurse educator (Melissa DeBelsler).

This program is offered at the Richmond Road Diagnostic and Treatment Centre Rheumatology Clinic in Calgary, Alberta, once a month for four hours and is open to any patient who goes to the clinic or lives in the city. We encourage patients to bring a family member or friend to the class. It is designed for patients newly diagnosed with inflammatory arthritis. Each team member speaks for about one hour in their area of expertise as it pertains to arthritis. This includes a discussion about what inflammatory arthritis is, and the role of medications, diet, smoking cessation, joint protection, and exercise. We touch upon important resources like social work and other support programs that are available to arthritis patients. Another critical component of the program is the opportunity for patients to interact with each other, giving them a chance to meet similar people struggling with the condition.



Dr. Vandana Ahluwalia and Dr. Raheem Kherani presented the Silver Practice Reflection Award to Dr. May Choi (middle).

Since our first session in November 2018, we have held five classes and taught 45 patients. Patients filled out a pre- and post-session questionnaire to identify potential future learning needs, assess the impact of the program, and to provide patient feedback. Prior to the session, most patients reported poor understanding of their diagnosis and the management of their condition. After the session, the patients stated that the session helped answer many of their questions and improved their overall understanding of their disease.

We are truly honored to have been awarded the Canadian Rheumatology Association Practice Reflection Grant. The funds are being used to optimize the session experience for patients and encourage attendance. We hope our story encourages others to create similar multidisciplinary education programs across the country and to involve rheumatology trainees.



Pictured from left to right: Alex Charlton, Melissa DeBelsler, Carolyn Johns, May Choi and Jennifer Nguyen.

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