

Survey Results: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

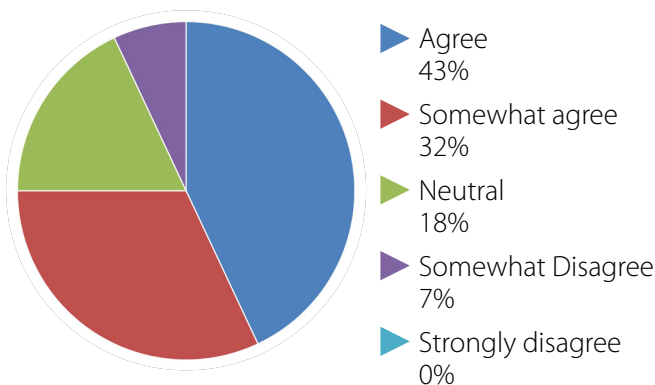
With an ever-evolving and diverse population, equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) initiatives are more important than ever before. Addressing gaps in equity, diversity and inclusion is long overdue in many parts of our society as we confront injustices past and present. This past year, the Canadian Rheumatology Association (CRA) created an EDI Task Force with the aim to ensure that the CRA is an inclusive, diverse association reflective of the Canadian population and that issues surrounding health equity are addressed and mitigated.

For this issue's Joint Count survey, the CRA asked its membership for their perspectives on EDI as it relates to the association and the Canadian rheumatology landscape. A total of 75 responses (out of a possible 578) were received, equating to a response rate of approximately 13%.

In the first part of the survey, members were asked to rate the CRA on various aspects of equity, diversity and inclusion. When asked to rate the following "People from all backgrounds and with a range of identities have equitable opportunities to advance their skills and engagement at the CRA", only 43% were in complete agreement (see Chart 1 for a complete breakdown). For a sample of questions on diversity and inclusion, refer to Charts 2 and 3.

When asked "What does equity, diversity and/or inclusion in the context of the CRA mean to you?" one member wrote, "I believe the focus should be on the composition of the CRA. Who are the members? Do they reflect the composition of Canadian society? What about the CRA staff, board and operational committee chairs? Do we run our meetings and events in such a way to promote full partici-

CHART 1:
Survey Results: "People from all backgrounds and with a range of identities have equitable opportunities to advance their skills and engagement at the CRA"



pation? Does the HR committee take specific actions in recruitment considering EDI? Do we use inclusive language in CRA communications?"

Other comments highlighted "actively promoting inclusive practices such as Indigenous sensitivity training"; "avoiding only Ontario and Quebec physicians/scientists in all committees"; and "not only including people of traditionally marginalized backgrounds (i.e. ethnicity, gender, language, physical disability) in things like committees or as speakers at events, but rather actively seeking them out to participate. Sometimes it is difficult for marginalized folks to feel comfortable stepping up on their own, so the reaching out step is key as well."

CHART 2:
Survey Results: "The CRA invests time and energy into building diverse teams."

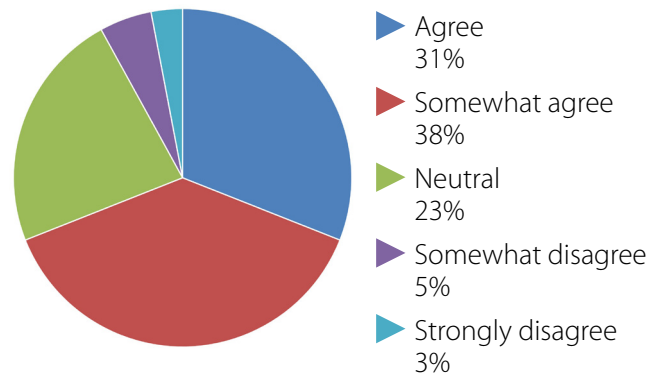
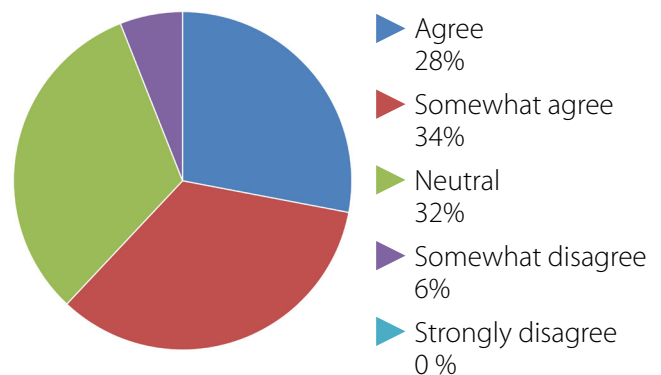


CHART 3:
Survey Results: "I feel my unique background and identity (namely my differences) are valued at the CRA."



What actions do you feel the CRA should take with respect to increasing equity, diversity and inclusion for all members and staff?

With regard to actions that the CRA should take, being transparent was mentioned in multiple comments. A couple of the comments remarked that the CRA is already quite diverse.

Some of the specific actions recommended included:

- Increase transparency and openness to members on the selection process for leadership
- Proactively include varied backgrounds in leadership positions and on committees (in terms of gender, culture, etc.)
- Honour those who are striving to make changes
- Continue to support diversity in training opportunities
- Provide seminars to all members, on a regional basis
- Build on relations with First Nations communities
- Offer scholarships or direct active recruitment of summer studentships to marginalized groups (i.e. BIPOC youth [high school/undergrad], LGBTQS2 youth, and those with physical disabilities or hearing impairments), in addition to traditional groups
- Attempt to attract and train a more diverse pool of new rheumatologists to reflect their representation in society
- Have modules or workshops given by members from marginalized groups to help increase others' awareness and provide strategies for inclusion in their clinics or practice
- Build awareness and identify potential barriers and gaps in implementation
- Ensure language is inclusive of all
- Acknowledge the importance of EDI in the CRA mission statement and include EDI principles in its values



The CRA welcomes your feedback and suggestions on equity, diversity, and inclusion as it relates to the CRA. For any other ideas or recommendations, you may reach out to Kevin Baijnauth at kbaijnauth@rheum.ca.