

# CIORA Grant: Work Disability and Function in SLE



By Janet Pope, MD, MPH, FRCPC

There were eight CIORA-funded abstracts presented at the 2022 CRA & AHPA Annual Scientific Meeting which included six posters, two poster tours and one podium presentation. Dr. Behdin Nowrouzi-Kia presented his CIORA grant on work disability and function in SLE, which is summarized below.

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## Work Disability and Function in Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE): A National Mixed-Methods Sequential Explanatory Study

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**S**LE is a multisystem autoimmune disease associated with significant Work Disability (WD) requiring a multidisciplinary approach to its management. SLE significantly impacts functional performance, engagement, and self-esteem, and decreases function. Moreover, SLE is one of the leading causes of WD. We hypothesize that the creation of a functional profile will enhance our understanding of the impact of SLE on patients' everyday functioning, allowing us to optimize interdisciplinary interventions.

The overall objective of this proposed project is to understand the determinants of WD and function and define how a multidisciplinary patient-centred collaborative intervention will support the delivery of care. Specifically, the study findings will support the creation of a functional profile of WD of patients with SLE in Canada; identify factors associated with WD in patients with SLE in Canada; and explore the lived experiences of SLE patients during their return-to-work journey.

A significant strength of this proposal is that our team's expertise, experience and perspectives align with CIORA's pillar of "Multidisciplinary Care Teams." Studies report that multidisciplinary teamwork in healthcare is associated with improved patient engagement and participation in the care processes in work rehabilitation. Moreover, our national team and the participation of different centres across Canada are essential to provide insight into the breadth and depth of WD and function in SLE and to enhance the external validity of this project's findings. The preliminary analysis on 91 confirmed cases with high level of WD found that WD was associated with several factors including treatment and the presence of other comorbidities (based on patient-reported outcomes: fatigue, fibromyalgia and depression). It is anticipated that the creation of a first-ever functional profile of WD will provide opportunities for a multidisciplinary team approach to deliver improved care and management of WD and functional outcomes.