
Canadian Heroes in Rheumatology: Dr. Claire Bombardier

Dr. Claire Bombardier has enjoyed a very robust and fruitful career spanning fifty years. As Chief Resident at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal in the early 1970s, she was a young 20-year-old woman in a predominantly male-led occupation. She had to demonstrate strength and perseverance. Upon completing medical school, she entered a new program at Stanford called the Clinical Scholar Program to study medical economics. She arrived in Toronto to find there wasn't a clinical epidemiology program there, just one being developed at McMaster (Hamilton). It was then that she decided she wanted to learn more about research design to



connect to her economics background. There weren't any role models in the field, no females, and no clinical epidemiologists. Dr. Bombardier wanted to change this and became deeply committed to the mentorship of young researchers, clinical fellows, and students. She had a significant impact in mentoring trainees, especially women researchers and diverse high-quality personnel who now lead innovative education, practice, policy, and research programs in Canada and internationally, and who have achieved their own international success as clinician-scientists, researchers, and policy/decision makers.

Dr. Bombardier continues to prove her life-long commitment to ensuring that people with lived experience co-create health system innovation. Time and time again, it can be demonstrated that her work has had measurable impacts at the local, national, and international levels. Dr. Bombardier's achievements have been highlighted in previous volumes of the *Journal of the Canadian Rheumatology Association (CRAJ)*, including an interview in 2009 when she received the Canadian Rheumatology Association Distinguished Investigator Award (2009; 19(1):11-12) and in 2016 to announce her American College of Rheumatology Distinguished Clinician Scholar Award (2016; 26(4):5).

When asked about the highlights of her career, Dr. Bombardier has identified several, including the opportunity to work in developing countries through the World Bank Health Initiative and through the Rockefeller

Foundation International Clinical Epidemiology Network (INCLIN). This led to her role in the creation of the clinical epidemiology program at the University of Toronto and her contributions to the development of the Institute for Work and Health. Dr. Bombardier has also accepted many academic and research leadership roles including a 13-year stint as the Division Director of Rheumatology at the University of Toronto, and 7 years as the Co-Scientific Director of the Canadian Arthritis Network, a National Centre of Excellence [2007-2014]. Dr. Bombardier has helped to position Canada as a leader in epidemiology, measurement, research

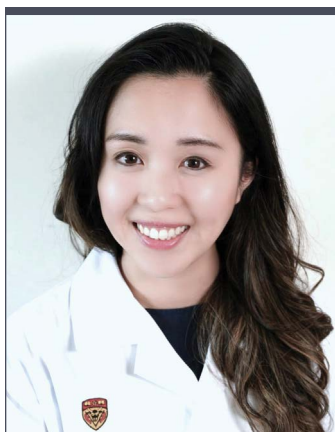
synthesis, guideline development and dissemination, and knowledge transfer and exchange with a focus on arthritis and musculoskeletal diseases.

Most recently, Dr. Bombardier leads the Ontario Best Practices Research Initiative (OBRI) since 2005. The OBRI is a collaborative data platform that follows patients in routine care along their clinical path. This Ontario cohort has grown to include 86 rheumatologists and more than 4,000 patients and explores the safety and effectiveness of treatments for patients living with rheumatoid arthritis and psoriatic arthritis. Dr. Bombardier credits the success of these and many other initiatives to the contributions of cross-sector and interdisciplinary collaborators and partners.

Dr. Bombardier has been exceptionally prolific in her scientific writing. To cite an example of this, in preparation for her Tier I Canada Research Chair renewal, a bibliographic analysis of her publications for the previous five years compared her to local peers at the University of Toronto and to peers in Canada, the U.S. and Europe/Australia and concluded: "Dr. Bombardier continues to produce a sizable publication output and citation impact. In a sub-analysis of only investigator-driven papers (defined as first and last authored papers), Dr. Bombardier's papers yielded a much higher proportion of Top 10%

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AWARDS, APPOINTMENTS, AND ACCOLADES



Dr. May Choi – Named one of Avenue Calgary’s Top 40 Under 40

Dr. May Choi was listed as a 2023 Top 40 Under 40 by Calgary Avenue Magazine. This annual award recognizes the best and brightest community builders, leaders, and artists under the age of 40, who are excelling in their careers, giving back to the community, and raising the profile of Calgary. Dr. Choi was named Top 40 Under 40 because of her dedication to helping patients with autoimmune rheumatic diseases and her research achievements. She feels very grateful for this recognition and thanks her mentors, Drs. Marvin Fritzler, Ann Clarke, and Karen Costenbader, and her family for their guidance and support, as well as her late father, Dr. Vincent Choi, for inspiring her to follow in his footsteps.



Dr. Jordi Pardo Pardo – Appointed Interim Chair of the Cochrane Governing Board

Dr. Jordi Pardo Pardo has been appointed as Interim Chair of the Cochrane Governing Board at the last meeting in September 2023. Cochrane is an international non-profit network, which sets the gold standard for synthesizing health research findings to facilitate evidence-based health care. Cochrane Reviews, found in the Cochrane Library (www.cochranelibrary.com) are up to date, follow a rigorous scientific methodology, and are free from commercial conflicts of interest.

Jordi is the contact person for methodological support to the Canadian Rheumatology Association guidelines.

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cited papers than her peers from University of Toronto, Canada, and the U.S., and was statistically similar to her European peers."

To date, Dr. Bombardier has published more than 400 highly cited papers, which include group consensus papers, independent investigator papers on measurement and methods, randomized controlled trials in high-impact journals, as well as the highly quoted report on "The Impact of Arthritis in Canada" (available at www.arthritisalliance.ca/en/). Most recently, her primary publications explore the real-world experiences of people living with inflammatory arthritis in usual care. Dr. Bombardier is ranked 19th in Canada and 567th among the top female scientists in the world by *Research.com* (as of 2023).

At the 2019 Arthritis Society Trailblazing Women in Arthritis gala, where Dr. Bombardier was presented

with the inaugural award, she spoke of the important work ahead for professionals and those hoping to enter the fields of medicine, research, education, and policy: "I am so proud of how many powerful and influential women there are in our field now. But it's important to remember that we can never begin to think that those trails are now open and available to all. More women will need our help in the future. And, even more than this, individuals from other communities will need our help in overcoming and removing barriers. Canadians from diverse and under-represented groups, refugees, and newcomers, and those living with evident and non-evident disabilities need our support in accessing opportunities for training and practice. We must move to inclusion, accessibility, and equity by design; inclusive practices drive innovation and benefit everyone."