

Canadian Rheumatology Association Meeting

The 63rd Annual Meeting and the 16th Winter Workshop of The Canadian Rheumatology Association (CRA) was held at the Fairmont Mt. Tremblant Hotel, Mt. Tremblant, Quebec, March 5–8, 2008.

The Program consisted of presentations covering original research, symposia, workshops, the Royal College debate, the Dunlop-Dottridge Lecture, and special awards and presentations, including the CRA Distinguished Rheumatologist and Distinguished Investigator.

A practical course and update for Fellows followed by a special luncheon preceded the meeting. The national annual update, chaired by Nader Khalidi, covered gout metabolism, menopause in lupus, and plasmapheresis in vasculitis. CRA President Gunnar Kraag introduced podium presentations by trainees, with Proton Rahman presiding. Presentations were followed by a state of the art lecture on “medical error” by Kaveh Shojania of Ottawa. Concurrent workshops then covered a diversity of topics and were well attended.

Medicolegal issues for rheumatologists were covered in the Thieves’ Market session, with Susan Swiggum representing the Canadian Medical Protective Association. Her presentation evoked considerable interest and discussion. It was followed by the first of 2 poster sessions that drew wide interest.

The Fellows breakfast on March 7 set the stage for the Annual General Meeting of the CRA, where the major issue was the CRA acquisition of *The Journal of Rheumatology*, introduced by Arthur Bookman and successfully approved by the membership.

A state of the art lecture by Hani El-Gabalawy was a remarkable multifaceted approach to current understanding of the pathogenesis of rheumatoid arthritis.

This year’s Royal College debate was entitled “Who Treats Rheumatoid Arthritis the Best — East versus West?”. Tony Russell and John Esdaile represented the West, and Simon Crette and Michel Zimmer the East. The debate was characterized by each team exposing the weaknesses of their opponents, using their adversaries’ own data to the detriment of the “West is Best” slogan.

A number of awards were presented. The Basic Science Award went to Dr. Steve Kwan Tat of the Osteoarthritis Unit, University of Montreal. He described how modulation

of subchondral bone RANKL contributed to the osteoarthritis process as a specific treatment target. The P.S. Rosen Award went to Dr. Vinod Chandran, Toronto Western Hospital. He studied a cohort of patients who presented with psoriasis before onset of arthritis to establish an incidence of 5.5% of arthritis in the first year of followup. The Ian Watson Award went to Dr. Carolina Landolt-Marticorena, Toronto Western Research Institute. She indicated how BAFF could play a role in lupus patients to affect altered B cell phenotypes. The Best Overall Paper, awarded to Dr. Mélanie Dieudé, McGill University Research Institute, reported how autoantibodies to murine hsp60 could be induced in non-autoimmune mice to promote arterial thrombosis. The Best Paper by an Undergraduate Student was awarded to Joanne Bostwick, McMaster University, Hamilton. She described how medical students could better learn to improve their performance of musculoskeletal physical examination using video methodology.

The Distinguished Rheumatologist Award went to Dr. Diane Mosher, former CRA President and best-selling author, from Dalhousie University in Halifax, in recognition of her overall contribution to Canadian Rheumatology at the highest professional and voluntary level. Dr. David Bell, of the University of Western Ontario, London, received the Distinguished Investigator Award for his original clinical and scientific contributions to a better understanding of the immunology of inflammatory rheumatic diseases.

The meeting concluded with the Dunlop-Dottridge lecture, presented by Dr. Michael Weinblatt, of Brigham and Women’s Hospital, a Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts. His informative lecture was entitled “Questions and Answers about Biologics in 2008.”

Despite the extraordinary winter storm on Saturday, the enthusiasm of Canadian rheumatologists and the greater than ever attendance is well reflected in the abstracts of the meeting published in this issue.

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