

Slow Advances in Supply of Canadian Rheumatologists

To the Editor:

The recent article by Barber, *et al* presents important data on the Canadian rheumatology workforce and the quantitative shortcomings that require remediation¹. I wish to make a small correction. The authors state on page 255 of their article “to our knowledge, ours is the first national rheumatology workforce survey in Canada.” There actually was a previous survey by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and the Federal Department of National Health and Welfare². That survey showed that in 1975 there was 1 rheumatologist per 180,000 population. The report expressed the wish for a ratio of 1:118,200 to be achieved at some unspecified time in the future. In 2017, we are better off than we were in 1975, although the advance has occurred at a less than dizzying pace. It remains to be seen how the 10 provincial and 3 territorial healthcare systems (not to mention the federal one) will address the challenges identified in 2017 for more rheumatologists and a better distribution. The prospects of early success are not rosy in a country that still ranks low in access to healthcare³.

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