



**2026
ANNUAL
SCIENTIFIC
MEETING**



**2026
ASSEMBLÉE
SCIENTIFIQUE
ANNUELLE**

APRIL 16-19 • HALIFAX, NS • 16-19 AVRIL

The meeting will allow for clinical and scholarly collaboration and will provide attendees with the opportunity to interact with one another for the benefit of our patients. Peer mentoring will be facilitated.

By the end of the meeting, participants will be able to:

1. Discuss new concepts in rheumatic diseases
2. Appraise new management paradigms and guidelines for rheumatic diseases

ASM Learning Objectives

Thursday April 16, 2026

Year in Review: Basic/Clinical Science and Pediatric Review

Pediatric Review

Dr. Elizabeth Stringer

This session will provide a critical review of a selection of impactful pediatric rheumatology publications from the past year. Emphasis will be on findings that can directly influence clinical practice including research on treatment, models of care, patient counseling, and patient outcomes. With each publication/disease reviewed, pearls relevant to both pediatric and adult rheumatologists will be included.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Summarize take-home messages from a selection of impactful pediatric rheumatology publications from the past year.
2. Consider how to integrate information from this session into clinical practice.
3. Identify knowledge gaps to inform future research.

Basic Science Review

Dr. Proton Rahman

In the past year, significant biomedical studies have emerged that have advanced our understanding of rheumatic diseases and improved treatment options for affected patients. This review highlights key research findings from some of these studies.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Analyze the genetic profiles of autoinflammatory diseases to understand their heterogeneity and implications for treatment.
2. Explore the central axis of multi-immune-mediated inflammatory diseases to identify shared mechanisms and potential therapeutic targets.
3. Investigate the delivery methods and mechanisms of CAR T cell therapy in systemic lupus erythematosus to evaluate its efficacy and safety.

Clinical Science Review

Dr. Alexandra Legge

This "Year in Review – Clinical Science" session will highlight the most influential peer-reviewed studies published in the field of clinical rheumatology over the past 12 months. Attendees will gain an evidence-based update on emerging concepts and practice-changing advances in clinical rheumatology, with a focus on the most cutting-edge developments that promise to shape the future of clinical care.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Summarize the most impactful clinical rheumatology literature published within the past year.
2. Identify emerging trends and novel concepts influencing current and future rheumatology practice.
3. Apply recent peer-reviewed evidence to inform clinical decision-making and optimize health outcomes.

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Communicator
3. Collaborator
4. Health Advocate

Tough to Treat: Rethinking Strategy in Tough-to-Treat Rheumatoid Arthritis

Drs. Louis Bessette and Denis Poddubnyy

Despite major therapeutic advances in inflammatory arthritis, a subset of patients continue to experience persistent symptoms, treatment failure, and impaired quality of life. This session will explore the evolving concepts of difficult-to-manage spondyloarthritis (D2M SpA) and difficult-to-treat rheumatoid arthritis (D2T RA), highlighting current definitions, prevalence, clinical burden, and emerging phenotypes.

Through real-world clinical cases, participants will examine the complex mechanisms underlying refractory disease, including persistent inflammatory activity, comorbid conditions, and non-inflammatory pain mechanisms. The session will emphasize practical strategies to distinguish ongoing inflammation from alternative drivers of symptoms using clinical assessment, imaging and biomarkers. In addition, the limitations of traditional treat-to-target approaches will be discussed, along with mechanism-based and innovative management strategies, including combination therapies and emerging immune-modulating therapies.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Define difficult-to-treat rheumatoid arthritis (D2T RA) and recognize its clinical burden and phenotypes.
2. Define and differentiate between difficult-to-manage (D2M) and treatment-refractory (TR) axial spondyloarthritis (axSpA).
3. Integrate current and emerging management strategies for D2T RA, D2M and TR axSpA.

CanMEDS Roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Communicator
3. Collaborator
4. Health Advocate
5. Scholar

Clinical Pearls and Mysterious Cases

When It Isn't Just Asthma: A Case of Recurrent Periocular Swelling in a Multi-System Inflammatory Disorder

Rahaf Attar

A Myopathic Mystery

Brett Henderson

Erdheim-Chester Disease: An Important Mimicker of Rheumatologic Diseases

Athena Huynh

The Puzzle of a Puffy Face

Sonali Mitra

A Mysterious Case of CVID and Germline Mutations

Sofia Rieger-Torres

This session features a series of Clinical Pearls and Mysterious Cases designed to address both common and complex challenges in everyday practice. Short, practical medical tips and puzzling clinical cases, drawn from patient-centered observations, provide actionable insights and key takeaways.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Apply clinical pearls to their practices
2. Recognize & evaluate the clinical reasoning necessary to solve mysterious cases

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Collaborator

Keynote Lecture: Holistic Rheumatology: Safe and Effective Ways to Incorporate Integrative Autoimmune Care into your Practice

Elizabeth Volkmann

Patients with autoimmune rheumatic diseases are highly motivated to improve their health using integrative medicine. Unfortunately, many patients turn to social media and influencers to guide this aspect of their journey, and in turn, may receive misguided advice from individuals who are not trained to care for patients with rheumatic diseases. This keynote lecture will outline safe and effective strategies for incorporating a holistic approach in your rheumatology practice with a focus on nutrition, supplement use, and mind-body interventions. This lecture will also demonstrate how specific interventions may restore homeostasis to the gut microbiome and lower inflammation. When you leave this session, you will feel better equipped and inspired to empower your patients with new information to guide their autoimmune disease journeys.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Outline safe and effective strategies for incorporating a holistic approach in your rheumatology practice
2. Identify nutritional approaches that restore homeostasis to the gut microbiome and lower inflammation
3. Describe mind-body approaches to equip patients with accessible coping strategies

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Communicator
3. Collaborator
4. Leader
5. Health Advocate
6. Professional

Friday April 17, 2026

Podium Presentations

POD01: Using a Novel Approach to Evaluate the Population-Level Burden of Disability Among Working-Age Individuals with Rheumatoid Arthritis

Jessica Widdifield

POD02: Feasibility Study to Implement Quality Indicator Toolkits for Rehabilitation After Total Hip and Knee Replacement: Patient and Clinician Toolkit User Metrics

Marie Westby

POD03: Lupus Double-Negative B Cells Harbor Expanded Somatic Mutations in Lymphoma-Relevant Pathways

Yumika Shiba

POD04: Distinct Fever Resolution Trajectories and Phenotypic Clustering in PFAPA and Surf: A Survival and Dimensional Analysis

Yulia Vyzhga

POD05: Characterizing Memory T Cells Associated with Systemic Lupus Erythematosus Pathogenesis

Carol Nassar

POD06: Sialic Acid-Binding Ig-Like Lectin 1: A Serological Biomarker for Pulmonary Involvement in Idiopathic Inflammatory Myopathies

Nathan Barreth

POD07: Citrullination of Neutrophil Serine Proteases Enhances Proteolytic Activity, Stability and Autoantigenicity in Rheumatoid Arthritis

Liam O'Neil

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Describe clinical, basic and epidemiological research conducted by CRA members
2. Describe recent advances in clinical rheumatic disease research, basic science research, and clinical epidemiological research performed by trainee members of the CRA & medical undergraduates
3. Identify recent progress in academic rheumatology research across Canada

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Scholar

Dunlop-Dottridge Lecture: From Serendipity to Science: How Anti-HMGCR Antibodies Changed our Understanding of Myositis

Dr. Lisa Christopher-Stine

This session will trace the journey of discovery that transformed our understanding of a once-enigmatic muscle disease. We will begin with the clinical puzzle of patients who developed a severe, progressive myopathy after statin exposure, which paradoxically persisted and even worsened after the drug was discontinued. The talk outlines the landmark studies that led to the identification of anti-HMGCR antibodies, a discovery that defined a new autoimmune disease. The presentation will delve into the unique pathogenic mechanism, where the immune system targets the very enzyme inhibited by statins, leading to a self-sustaining cycle of muscle damage and regeneration. We will explore the distinct clinical and histopathological features of this condition, including its presentation in both adults and children, and discuss the latest breakthroughs in understanding its lipotoxic effects. Finally, the session will outline current best practices for diagnosis and the aggressive, stepwise treatment strategies required to manage this potentially devastating, but often treatable, myopathy.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the characteristic clinical presentation, laboratory findings, and risk factors associated with anti-HMGCR myopathy, and distinguish it from toxic statin myopathy.
2. Explain the complex pathophysiological mechanism of anti-HMGCR myopathy.
3. Formulate an appropriate diagnostic and therapeutic plan for a patient with suspected anti-HMGCR myopathy.

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Leader
3. Scholar

The Great Debate: Be it Resolved that Medications Should be Tapered in Patients with Inflammatory Arthritis in Remission

Chair: Dr. Volodko Bakowsky
For: Drs. Jamie Guzman and Glen Hazlewood
Against: Drs. Bindee Kuriya and Alexandra Charlton

The motion will be debated by opposing teams (in favour vs against) in a friendly and fun atmosphere sure to be both educational and entertaining.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Summarize the evidence in favour of tapering medications under certain circumstances in patients with inflammatory arthritis.
2. Identify the perils and pitfalls of tapering medications in these patients that need to be considered.
3. Learn more about some of your great colleagues from accross the country as they battle for the win!

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Health Advocate
3. Scholar

Workshop Session 1

1A Holistic Rheumatology: An Interactive Workshop to Enhance Integrative Care

Dr. Elizabeth Volkmann

Patients with autoimmune rheumatic diseases are often self-motivated to improve their health using integrative medicine. This interactive session will feature patient cases to demonstrate how you can apply a holistic approach to autoimmune care. Each case will highlight a specific area of integrative medicine, including mind-body approaches, nutritional strategies, and judicious use of supplements. Audience members will also be able to experience an example of an effective mind-body approach through a guided breath work practice. When you leave this session, you should feel better and inspired to empower your patients with new information to guide their autoimmune disease journeys.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Outline nutritional strategies to address inflammation
2. Identify accessible mind-body approaches for people living with autoimmune diseases
3. Apply evidence to guide your recommendations related to the use of supplements

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Communicator
3. Collaborator
4. Leader
5. Health Advocate
6. Professional

1B IgG4-Related Disease: Diagnosis and Management

Drs. Andreu Fernandez-Codina, Hughes Allard-Chamard, Mollie Carruthers

IgG4-related disease (IgG4-RD) is a fibroinflammatory condition with protean manifestations that frequently mimics malignancy, infection, and other immune-mediated diseases. Despite increasing recognition, significant uncertainty remains regarding optimal diagnostic strategies, the role of biopsy and serum IgG4 testing, and treatment selection in real-world practice.

This interactive, case-based workshop will provide a practical framework for diagnosing and managing IgG4-RD in general rheumatology practice, with emphasis on classification criteria, diagnostic pitfalls, mimickers, and evidence-based treatment approaches using accessible therapies.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Develop a structured diagnostic approach to suspected IgG4-related disease, integrating clinical features, histology, imaging, and appropriate use of ACR/EULAR criteria.
2. Formulate evidence-informed management plans based on organ involvement, disease severity, and access to glucocorticoids, DMARDs, and biologic therapies.
3. Communicate diagnostic uncertainty and collaborate with multidisciplinary teams in the management of IgG4-related disease.

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Communicator
3. Collaborator
4. Leader
5. Scholar

1C Best Practices for Cardiomyopathy Monitoring in Antimalarial Use in Systemic Lupus Erythematosus

Drs. Zahi Touma, Paula Harvey, Sasha Bernatsky and Areej Alharthi

Antimalarials (AMs), such as hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine, are key drugs which can decrease the risk of serious disease flares for systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). Though effective and well tolerated, long-term use may cause adverse events. The American College of Cardiology, in collaboration with rheumatologists, published an expert analysis on AM-related cardiotoxicity. Cardiotoxicity is a serious adverse event that, without appropriate screening and prevention, can lead to heart failure and even death. The authors suggest that clinicians pursue more investigations into their patients' heart health when new or irregular cardiac symptoms are noticed during routine monitoring. We want to engage with this topic with the intention of developing and validating formal screening recommendations and Canadian guidelines to best treat our patients. We will present a review of the topic followed by a guided discussion with our leading experts.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify the pathology, epidemiology, and latest American College of Cardiology updates on antimalarial-related cardiotoxicity.
2. Recognize key imaging findings and diagnostic approaches to distinguish antimalarial-related cardiotoxicity and apply best practices for monitoring and screening.
3. Promote awareness and implementation of standardized screening and management strategies within the rheumatology and cardiology communities, including clinicians, trainees, and patients.

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Collaborator
3. Scholar
4. Professional

1D Unexplained Lymphadenopathy: Recognizing Rare Disease Patterns in the Rheumatology Clinic

Drs. Alexandra Legge and Luke Chen

Rheumatologists often receive referrals for evaluation of “Lymphadenopathy NYD” but may lack familiarity with some of the rare systemic inflammatory conditions that can underlie this presentation. This paired specialty workshop aims to enhance the knowledge and skills of rheumatologists in the diagnostic evaluation of patients with unexplained lymphadenopathy. Through case-based discussions led by a world expert, participants will learn about uncommon causes of lymphadenopathy, such as Castleman disease, IgG4-related disease, adult onset Still’s disease, and histiocyte disorders. Audience polling questions will be used to enhance interactivity.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. List a differential diagnosis for non-infectious and non-malignant causes of unexplained lymphadenopathy.
2. Develop an approach to the investigation of unexplained lymphadenopathy in the rheumatology clinic and interpretation of key histological findings and laboratory tests.
3. Describe the key differentiating features of rare systemic inflammatory conditions that can present with unexplained lymphadenopathy.

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Collaborator
3. Scholar

1E From Pre-Conception to Post-Partum: An Interprofessional Guide to Caring for Women with Spondyloarthritis

Dr. Dharini Mahendira and Angelo Papachristos

This workshop will provide an evidence-based overview of best practice recommendations for the assessment and clinical management of women with spondyloarthritis throughout the pregnancy continuum. The session will cover key considerations from initial diagnosis to pre-conception counseling, and through the course of pregnancy and postpartum.

A unique aspect of this workshop is the interplay between medical management, physiotherapy and occupational therapy for optimal patient outcomes. Our clinic has taken a unique and comprehensive approach to the field of Reproductive Women’s Health, truly integrating medical and rehabilitative science in women with SpA, focusing not only minimizing disease activity rather optimization of function and health status.

Targeted to adult rheumatologists, residents, trainees, and allied health professionals, the workshop will draw upon the most current literature and evidence-based practice, as well as presenters’ extensive clinical experience. Participants will be grouped into interprofessional teams to work through specialized case studies, fostering a collaborative approach to providing optimal patient care.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify key differences in the clinical assessment and management of spondyloarthritis in pregnant and postpartum individuals compared to the general patient population.
2. Summarize evidence-based practices and recommendations for both pharmacologic and non-pharmacological management strategies for women with spondyloarthritis throughout the pregnancy continuum.
3. Develop interprofessional strategies for collaborative care by discussing specialized case studies with colleagues from diverse professional backgrounds.

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Collaborator
3. Health Advocate
4. Professional

1F Translational Science

WORKSHOP1F_01: Autoantibodies to 14-3-3 η : A Novel Diagnostic Biomarker for Axial Spondyloarthritis

Walter Maksymowych

WORKSHOP1F_02: Acyl-Alkyl-Phosphatidylcholine C40:6 is Potentially a Causal Biomarker for Obesity-Related Knee Osteoarthritis: Data from Four Independent Cohorts

Jingyi Huang

WORKSHOP1F_03: Clinical and Genetic Spectrum of Familial Mediterranean Fever in Adult Patients: Insights from a Canadian Autoinflammatory Clinic

Rayan Farahvash

WORKSHOP1F_04: ANA-Reactive IgG Memory B Cells Differentiate and Proliferate Abnormally Via T-Dependent Stimulation in Patients with SLE

Kaijen Gu

Rheumatic diseases stem from a complex interplay between genetic and epigenetic changes which may promote immune dysregulation and/or disease progression. In this session, we will present four abstracts that will explore emerging insights into disease mechanisms.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Discuss the roles of B/T cell interactions in linking disease progression in SLE.
2. Highlight biomarkers in SpA and OA linked to the disease process.
3. Evaluate the genotype-to-phenotype changes in autoinflammatory syndromes.

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Leader
3. Health Advocate
4. Professional

1G Unmet Needs in Pediatric Rheumatology: An Update

WORKSHOP1G_01: Extremely High Maternal Anti-Ro/la Antibody Titers Predict Non-Cardiac Neonatal Lupus Erythematosus Manifestations

Madeline Beron

WORKSHOP1G_02: The Interplay Between Functional Status, Quality of Life, and Productivity: A Rheum4U Precision Health Registry Study

Dianne Mosher

WORKSHOP1G_03: Ethnic Disparities in Mental Health Screening and Outcomes in Youth with Childhood-Onset Systemic Lupus Erythematosus

Alicia Tran

WORKSHOP1G_04: Transition to Adulthood Through Coaching and Empowerment in Rheumatology (Tracer): Patient-Reported Outcomes of a Feasibility Randomized-Controlled Trial

Michelle Batthish

Childhood inflammatory Arthritis in children can stem from various rheumatic diseases and can result in challenges related to both patients and their care givers. The factors that promote them are also poorly understood. In this session, we will provide an overview related to some of the unmet needs in patients' childhood arthritis, their impacts on patients and their care givers, and the value of novel biomarkers in the care of these patients.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Discuss the importance of elevated maternal Anti-Ro/la antibody titres in predicting non-cardiac neonatal Lupus manifestations.
2. Discuss the impact of JIA on patients and in high-risk populations.
3. Highlight the potential effects of coaching and empowerment on patient reported outcomes during the transitioning from childhood to adulthood.

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Leader
3. Health Advocate
4. Professional

Workshop Session 2

2A Myositis: A Practical Workshop for the Rheumatologist

Dr. Lisa Christopher-Stine

Idiopathic inflammatory myopathies (IIM) represent a heterogeneous group of autoimmune disorders that pose significant diagnostic and therapeutic challenges in clinical practice. This workshop is designed to provide learners with a practical, evidence-based framework for managing myositis.

Through a series of real-world case studies, we will move beyond textbook definitions to explore the nuances of clinical decision-making. Key topics will include the interpretation of myositis-specific antibodies as a roadmap for prognosis, distinguishing true myositis from mimics, and optimizing treatment strategies—from initial steroid-sparing agents to managing refractory disease and interstitial lung disease.

Attendees will leave with a toolkit of "clinical pearls" and actionable "dos and don'ts" to improve patient outcomes and confidence in managing this complex rheumatic disease.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Confidently identify the major clinical and serological subtypes of IIM.
2. Develop a systematic and practical treatment plan for newly diagnosed myositis.
3. Manage common and complex clinical scenarios, including refractory disease and extra-muscular manifestations.

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Leader
3. Scholar

2B Unravelling Neurological Manifestations of Connective Tissue Diseases

Drs. Kim Legault and Sashi Perera

In this fun and interactive workshop co-presented by a Neurologist and a Rheumatologist, we will discuss central nervous system (CNS) manifestations of connective tissue diseases, including systemic lupus erythematosus, Sjogren's disease, systemic sclerosis, and antiphospholipid syndrome. We will discuss approaches for how to assess for active CNS inflammation, including differentiating from thrombotic events, and non-inflammatory manifestations. Finally, we will discuss therapeutic options for the varying manifestations of CNS involvement in connective tissue disease.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify CNS manifestations of connective tissue diseases, including systemic lupus erythematosus, Sjogren's disease, systemic sclerosis, and antiphospholipid syndrome.
2. Discuss approaches for how to assess for active CNS inflammation in connective tissue diseases
3. Identify therapeutic options for the varying manifestations of CNS involvement in connective tissue diseases.

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Collaborator
3. Scholar

2C Capillaries, Microhemorrhages and Giants: A Practical Approach for the Microvascular Examination in Rheumatology

Drs. Mo Osman, Genevieve Gyger, Hyein Kim

This workshop will explore the utility of capillaroscopy in patients with Raynaud's phenomenon and connective tissue disease. Following a review and definition of capillary abnormalities and patterns, clinical cases will be presented. A hands-on practice session will then allow participants to learn how to perform nailfold video capillaroscopy.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify the indications for conducting a microvascular examination using nailfold video capillaroscopy.
2. Compare the performance of various hand-held capillaroscopy devices in the evaluation of autoimmune connective tissue diseases.
3. Explain relevant microvascular abnormalities present in autoimmune connective tissue diseases.

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Leader
3. Health Advocate

2D Recent Clinical Developments in the Understanding of Inflammatory Arthritis

WORKSHOP2D_01: High-Resolution Thermography and Artificial Intelligence to Evaluate and Classify Rheumatoid Arthritis

Lana Mackic

WORKSHOP2D_02: Characterizing Publicly Funded Medication Utilization and Expenditures for Individuals with Rheumatoid Arthritis of All Ages in Ontario

Jessica Widdifield

WORKSHOP2D_03: Preventable Hospital Admissions in Persons with Psoriatic Arthritis and Axial Spondyloarthritis: A Population-Based Study

Dani Contreras

WORKSHOP2D_04: Ultrasound-Detected Enthesitis Response to Advanced Therapies in Psoriatic Arthritis: a Real-World Study Highlighting Greater Improvement with IL-17 Inhibitors

Rahaf Attar

Inflammatory arthritides (e.g. rheumatoid arthritis and psoriatic arthritis) are common, but debilitating conditions of unclear etiology. Often, immunomodulatory therapies are utilized to reduce disease-associated complications and cost. Various imaging modalities have recently been proposed to improve outcomes in IA. In this session, we will review some of the recent developments related to these issues.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Discuss the utility of imaging modalities (e.g. high-resolution thermography and ultrasonography) in assessing and classifying patients with IA.
2. Evaluate the impact of IA on health care outcomes, namely costs and hospitalizations.

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Leader
3. Health Advocate
4. Professional

2E How to Implement the "Mini-Practice Audit Model": An Approach to Self-Assessment and Identifying Current Practice Patterns

Drs. Raheem Kherani and Madelaine Beckett

Are you looking for a strategy to engage with self-assessment and practice audits? The Mini-Practice Audit Model (mPAM) enables guided self-reflection through personalized, low-burden audits that reveal practice gaps, reinforce strengths, and support continuing professional development. Participants will engage with the mPAM framework, review a concept model designed based on the July 2022 Rheumatoid Arthritis guidelines, and begin designing their own mini-audits tailored to their practice. By the end, attendees will understand how mPAM can drive behaviour change, enhance documentation, and align care with evidence-based standards in both adult and pediatric rheumatology.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify the role of self-reflection as a tool for identifying strengths, weaknesses, and enhancing knowledge and behavioural changes in clinical practice
2. Implement an existing mini-Practice Audit Model (mPAM) framework designed to increase uptake of the current rheumatoid arthritis guidelines
3. Create personalized mini-audits that reflect participants' current practice profile and needs

CanMEDS roles

1. Communicator
2. Collaborator
3. Leader
4. Health Advocate

2F Demystifying 'That Mysterious Joint (TMJ)': a succinct, hands-on approach to TMJ assessment

Drs. Tara McGrath, Marinka Twilt and Tom Young

This workshop aims to highlight the importance of TMJ assessment while discussing a case of possible TMJ arthritis in a patient with JIA. In the first half of the workshop, we will discuss the differential diagnosis and review images including US and MRI and discuss the role of the physiotherapist in managing TMJ arthritis pain/symptoms. The second half of the workshop will focus on reviewing a succinct, standardized approach to TMJ clinical exam in small groups with patient volunteers and a mentor providing direct feedback and guidance.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify the importance of early TMJ disease detection and treatment in JIA.
2. Review the differential diagnosis of pediatric/adolescent TMJ pain and symptoms.
3. Develop a succinct and evidence-based approach to TMJ clinical examination.

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Collaborator

2G Putting Patients at the Centre: The CArE Transdisciplinary Team in Action

Ahava Lipetz, Peggy Beauchamp and Dr. Carter Thorne

The Centre of Arthritis Excellence (CArE) is the first community-based, Ministry-funded specialty health team in Ontario, delivering timely access to assessment, treatment, and patient education for arthritis and related conditions. This session will highlight how rheumatologists and interdisciplinary health professionals work side-by-side—sharing responsibilities and integrating scopes of practice—to enhance efficiency, improve patient experience, and achieve better outcomes. Participants will also learn how CArE streamlines clinic flow, delivers one-on-one and group self-management education, and gain practical insights for implementing a transdisciplinary model of care.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Appreciate how a transdisciplinary team functions in early rheumatology care, including shared responsibilities, overlapping roles, and maximized individual scopes of practice.
2. Understand how CArE's transdisciplinary team model improves timely access to care, enhances efficiency, strengthens patient experience, and contributes to better clinical outcomes.
3. Identify the history and funding of the CArE model and identify key lessons learned from its implementation and ongoing evolution.

CanMEDS roles

1. Collaborator
2. Leader
3. Health Advocate

Saturday April 18, 2026

Podium Presentations

POD08: Perimenopause is Associated with Increased Disease Activity in Psoriatic Arthritis

Lihi Eder

POD09: Increased Risk of Intrahepatic Cholestasis of Pregnancy in Women with Systemic Lupus Erythematosus Exposed to Azathioprine

Reem Farhat

POD10: A Rare SAT1 Variant in Early-Onset SLE: Case Report with Case-Control Functional Assay

Ali AlAsmari

POD11: Health Canada Indications and Formulary Coverage of Biologic and Synthetic Disease Modifying Anti-Rheumatic Drugs for Juvenile Arthritis: Are We Meeting Current Guidelines?

Amanda Laplante

POD12: Unraveling Sex-Specific Genetic Markers in Psoriatic Arthritis: Insights from a Genome-Wide Association Study

Katie Healey

POD13: Complex-, Difficult-To-Manage, and Treatment-Refractory Psoriatic Arthritis: Insights from a Prospective Cohort Study

Arabi Rasendrakumar

POD14: Characterizing Subjective Cognitive Impairment in Systemic Lupus Erythematosus Using the Perceived Deficits Questionnaire-20 and Associations with Objective Neuropsychological Testing

Justin Smith

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Describe clinical, basic and epidemiological research conducted by CRA members
2. Describe recent advances in clinical rheumatic disease research, basic science research, and clinical epidemiological research performed by trainee members of the CRA & medical undergraduates
3. Identify recent progress in academic rheumatology research across Canada

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Scholar

State-of-the-Art Lecture: Still's Disease and AOSD Across the Age Spectrum: Emerging Endotypes, Genomic Insights and Evolving Therapies

Dr. Michael Ombrello

Still's disease is a severe, enigmatic inflammatory condition that can develop at any point in the lifespan. Although therapeutic agents targeting interleukin (IL)-1 and IL-6 have been shown to induce remission in many people with Still's disease, their widespread adoption has been complicated by the emergence of genetically linked drug reactions and lung disease. In this session, we will discuss contemporary issues related to the diagnosis and treatment of Still's disease in children and adults.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. List the clinical features and complications of Still's disease in children and adults.
2. Describe the current treatment strategies and the "treat-to-target" approach in Still's disease.
3. Recognize risk factors for Still's disease-associated lung disease and drug-associated immune reactions.

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Communicator
3. Scholar

RheumJeopardy! 2026

Host: Philip Baer
Chair: Elizabeth Hazel
Captain East: Michelle Bridge
Captain West: Amieeleena Chhabra

Based on the classic TV game show Jeopardy!, every audience member will participate on one of 2 teams in an interactive contest testing your knowledge of rheumatology topics with a Canadian focus. Entertaining, provocative and fun!

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Demonstrate their knowledge of recent clinical and research findings in rheumatology.
2. Prove to skeptics that rheumatology is the broadest and most interesting medical subspecialty.
3. Increase personal resilience and reduce burnout by using gamification to enhance learning.

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Communicator
3. Scholar

Distinguished Investigator Keynote Address: Change is Hard but Living with Inequities is Harder: A Journey to Improving Arthritis Care in Canada

Dr. Cheryl Barnabe

Populations experiencing inequities in Canadian society, in particular Indigenous patients, have not gained the same benefits in arthritis outcomes as those in the general population. While low healthcare quality and access pose barriers to care, protective strategies to promote wellbeing with arthritis are not supported with current biomedical care models. This session will provide an overview of current inequities in rheumatology care in Canada, and share innovations in service delivery models aiming to resolve differential outcomes.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify current day inequities that exist in arthritis care in Canada, with a particular focus on Indigenous patient realities.
2. Consider individual, system and structural level care barriers experienced by persons living with both arthritis and inequities in society.
3. Discuss interventions that have been developed to resolve arthritis care gaps.

CanMEDS roles

1. Leader
2. Health Advocate
3. Professional

Workshop Session 3

3A Lung Disease and Drug Reactions in Still's Disease: What is the Way Forward?

Dr. Michael Ombrello

Over a century after its initial description, the face of Still's disease changed when lung disease and drug-associated immune reactions to anti-cytokine agents emerged in a subset of pediatric and adult patients. While the causes are unknown, clinical and genetic risk factors could help to guide therapeutic decision-making. In this session, we will discuss practical approaches to screening, diagnosing and treating Still's disease complicated by lung disease and hypersensitivity reactions.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. List the clinical risk factors for developing lung disease and hypersensitivity reactions in Still's disease.
2. Outline potential approaches to screening Still's disease patients for lung disease.
3. Describe therapeutic approaches to Still's disease with lung disease and hypersensitivity reactions.

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Communicator
3. Scholar

3B A Practical Approach to Autoinflammatory Diseases – What the Rheumatologist Needs to Know in 2026

Drs. Jason An and Sarah Hansen

Once confined to the realm of ultrarare, monogenic, pediatric onset recurrent fever syndromes, we now recognize that autoinflammatory diseases (AID) are 1) relatively common, 2) may present in adulthood, 3) have variable presentations beyond fevers of unknown origin, and 4) may mimic systemic autoimmune rheumatic diseases. As specialists in inflammatory diseases, it is essential that rheumatologists have a basic approach to the workup and management of AIDs.

This case-based interactive session will highlight clinical features that should prompt suspicion of AID and provide clinicians with a practical approach to workup (including ordering and interpreting genetic testing), and management.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Recognize the varied presentations of autoinflammatory diseases (AID) and key clinical features that should prompt suspicion of AID
2. Learn a practical approach to the workup of AID, including ordering and interpreting genetic testing
3. Develop an approach to management for patients with AID

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Collaborator
3. Scholar

3C Topicals from A to Z

Drs. Stephanie Keeling and Maryam Piram

This session will identify the available and upcoming topical therapies for adult and pediatric rheumatic diseases. Specific indications for topical therapy use will be presented with a focus on timing of use and how they serve as an adjunct to systemic therapies. Practical considerations for topical therapy use in rheumatic disease will be presented from dosage, location and side effects to differences between rheumatic diseases including lupus, rheumatoid arthritis and psoriatic arthritis. New and upcoming non steroid topical agents including tacrolimus and ruxolitinib will be discussed as well as their place between topical steroids and systemic agents. This presentation will aim to demonstrate the nuances of topical therapies in adult and pediatric rheumatology through case presentations.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand and differentiate between currently available topical therapies for rheumatic diseases and how they can be a useful adjunctive therapy for existing systemic treatments.
2. Apply knowledge to tailor use of specific topical therapies including dosage, location, duration of use and side effects for rheumatic diseases.
3. Expand beyond topical steroids to understand use of other topical agents including topical tacrolimus, ruxolitinib and other agents.

CanMEDS roles

4. Medical Expert
5. Communicator
6. Health Advocate
7. Scholar
8. Professional

3D Diagnosis and Management of Rapidly-Progressive Interstitial Lung Disease

Dr. Eugene Krustev and May Choi

Rapidly progressive interstitial lung disease (RP-ILD) is a life-threatening complication of connective tissue diseases that requires early recognition and prompt, aggressive treatment. This workshop will provide a practical, case-based approach to the diagnosis of RP-ILD, including key clinical, radiologic, and serologic features that identify high-risk patients, particularly those with anti-MDA5 dermatomyositis and anti-yntetase syndrome. We will also review the role of biomarkers such as anti-MDA5 antibodies, ferritin, and novel emerging biomarkers in risk stratification and disease monitoring. Evidence-based management strategies, including early combination immunosuppression and multidisciplinary care, will be discussed to support timely clinical decision-making.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Recognize the clinical, radiologic, and serologic features that identify patients at risk for rapidly progressive interstitial lung disease (RP-ILD).
2. Apply established and emerging biomarkers to support risk stratification and monitor disease activity in RP-ILD.
3. Implement evidence-based, multidisciplinary management strategies, including early combination immunosuppressive therapy for high-risk patients.

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Collaborator
3. Leader
4. Health Advocate
5. Scholar

3E CRA/CanRIO Living Guidelines for the Management of Baseline Immunosuppression for Pre-existing Rheumatic Diseases When Initiating Cancer Immunotherapy

Drs. Carrie Ye, Liam O'Neil, Roko Nikolic, Shahin Jamal

While immune checkpoint inhibitors (ICIs) are increasingly used in patients with pre-existing rheumatic diseases (PRDs), a key concern is whether baseline immunosuppression at the start of ICI treatment might negatively impact cancer outcomes. This risk must be carefully weighed against the potential for a PRD flare.

The Canadian Research Group of Rheumatology in Immuno-Oncology (CanRIO), with methodological support from the Canadian Rheumatology Association (CRA), completed a systematic literature review to inform this first installment of our living guideline. Using the GRADE approach, the panel developed 8 best practice statements and 11 recommendations for the management of baseline immunosuppression in individuals with PRDs.

These guidelines are the first in the world to address baseline immunosuppression by specific PRD in patients initiating ICIs for cancer. This workshop will go through the recommendations and the evidence supporting them.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Identify the potential risks and benefits of baseline immunosuppression in individuals with PRD initiating ICI therapy for cancer.
2. Summarize the recommendations for baseline immunosuppression in individuals with pre-existing inflammatory arthritis.
3. Summarize the recommendations for baseline immunosuppression in individuals with pre-existing systemic autoimmune rheumatic diseases.

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Collaborator
3. Health Advocate

3F Translational Insights in the Pathogenesis and Biomarkers Linked to Systemic Autoimmune Rheumatic Diseases

WORKSHOP3F_01: Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes Within the Lupus in Pregnancy (Legacy) Cohort: Anti-Phosphatidylserine/prothrombin Igg Antibodies Are Stronger Predictors than Lupus Anticoagulant

Reem Farhat

WORKSHOP3F_02: Characterizing Immune Cell Subsets and Interferon in the Kidneys of Lupus Nephritis Patients

Sabah Kahnemuyipour

WORKSHOP3F_03: Non-IgG Anti-Double-Stranded DNA Antibodies in Systemic Lupus Erythematosus: Biomarkers of Extrarenal Disease Activity

Carolina Munoz Grajales

WORKSHOP3F_04: Feasibility of Saliva-Based Autoantibody Detection in Systemic Lupus Erythematosus

Dianne Mosher

Systemic lupus erythematosus is a life-threatening autoimmune condition associated with thrombosis, and systemic inflammation. In this session, we will provide an overview related to the gaps related in managing these patients and inflammatory changes associated with the disease.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Evaluate the importance of various immune cell subsets in lupus nephritis.
2. Discuss the role for novel biomarkers in prognosticating various disease factors in SLE (e.g. thrombosis, inflammation, pregnancy).

CanMEDS roles

1. Medical Expert
2. Leader
3. Health Advocate
4. Professional

3G Best Practice Recommendations for Assessing and Treating Idiopathic Inflammatory Myopathies for the Allied Health Professional

Shirin von Mende and Alison To

Idiopathic inflammatory myopathies (IIM) affect more than 50,000 Canadians leading to variable and often marked disability. This workshop targets allied health professionals to provide an overview of best practice recommendations for the assessment and clinical management of idiopathic inflammatory myopathies (IIM). Based on a review of current evidence and expert consultation, the speakers will review key aspects of IIM assessment including strength, physical function, balance, cardiovascular health, and use of patient reported outcome measures. The second portion of our session will examine treatment options with a focus on key elements for patient education, exercise prescription, fatigue management, and targeting functional limitations. This session will provide clinical pearls to increase health professionals' knowledge and confidence in assessing and treating this patient population.

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. List key elements in assessing an individual with Idiopathic Inflammatory Myopathy
2. Indicate key elements for patient education in this population
3. Identify principles of individualized exercise prescription and progression

CanMEDS roles

1. Communicator
2. Collaborator
3. Health Advocate