

# Mentoring Future Leaders in Rheumatology

Over the past nine years, the CRA has nurtured its mentorship program, designed for early career stage rheumatologists who are likely to become leaders in research, education, and/or advocacy in Canada. Dubbed FLIRT, short for Future Leaders in RheumaTology, this program operates in two-year cycles, comprised of various initiatives identified directly with its participants, and in collaboration with Canadian mentors as well as expert advisors. The program teaches its participants valuable leadership skills including peer reviewing, mentor-mentee training, coaching, communication and presentation styles, among other skills. Another focus of FLIRT is important skill-building initiatives such as time management, career progression, interpersonal relations, setting expectations and the importance of managing a practical work-life balance.

FLIRT has involved participants from across the country in both adult and pediatric rheumatology, both those involved in community practice and in academia. Participants include basic scientists, clinical researchers, teachers and those with other roles at their institutions or within their communities. All nomination submissions are peer-reviewed and are accepted to participate in the program based on their CV, letter of intent and reference letter. These groups of participants, including those among



the many cycles of graduates, are varied in age and interest with a variety of career pathways. As a result, the program creates outstanding discussion and networking opportunities, which also serve to strengthen the bonds within the rheumatology community. FLIRT participants ultimately represent the future of rheumatology within Canada.

As the program approaches its tenth year of operation, several past graduates have moved on to leadership positions at their institutions and various other establishments, including within the CRA. The current program cycle runs until spring 2020, at which point another call for applications will go out to members of the CRA. If you would like to learn more about the Future Leaders in RheumaTology mentorship program, please visit the Canadian Rheumatology Association's website at [rheum.ca/flirt-mentorship-program/](http://rheum.ca/flirt-mentorship-program/).

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## Editorial (Continued from page 3)

Ewen Cameron, a prominent psychiatrist and one-time president of both the Canadian and American Psychiatric Associations. Subjects received LSD, high-intensity electroconvulsive therapy and "psychic driving" treatment, often while in drug-induced comas. The MK Ultra project did not end until 1973. Some Canadian victims received compensation in 1992, but many did not.

Which brings me full circle to the movie "Three Identical Strangers." As a father of twins, I have always been interested in stories about twins, triplets and higher-order multiple births. Without spoiling the movie, which I highly recommend, the story revolves around identical triplets, adopted out to 3 different families in New York state in 1961, and unaware of the

existence of their siblings until chance intervened in 1980. At that point, they experienced their 15 minutes of fame, but the future featured tragedy, as well as the discovery that their adoption had been part of a scientific study gone rogue, akin in its own way to the studies I outlined above.

Next time you wonder why enrolment of patients in clinical trials has become much more rigorous, the answer lies in the failings of scientific researchers not very far removed from the present.

*Philip A. Baer, MDCM, FRCPC, FACP  
Editor-in-chief, CRAJ  
Scarborough, Ontario*