

B.C. Society of Rheumatologists (BCSR) – Update from the Pacific

By Jason Kur, MD, FRCPC

This past year has seen the BCSR work through challenges related to the mandated biosimilar transition of rituximab and subsequently adalimumab. The adalimumab transition concluded in October 2021. British Columbia (B.C.) has now completed biosimilar switching for etanercept, infliximab, rituximab and adalimumab from 2018-2021. These transitions have come with significant strain on physician practices and unique challenges for patients. We continue to monitor the process and provide feedback to Pharmacare. The partnership with Pharmacare has resulted in some shared gain for rheumatologists in BC, notably added support for outpatient nursing care.

This year has also seen the establishment of a rural rheumatology training grant. Trainees from across Canada interested in electives in under-served areas will be eligible for support. The BC Rheum 2 Grow group is composed of rheumatologists in Chilliwack, Cranbrook, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, Penticton, Golden and Prince George, B.C. The grant will support Canadian rheumatology residents in furthering their education in rural patient care and enable residents to experience rural patient care within clinic and hospital settings with a University of British Columbia (UBC) faculty member. By exposing the rheumatology residents to a supportive, clinically stimulating and fulfilling experience, it is hoped that many of them will consider a future working in one of these underserved but dynamic areas of the province.

The 16th annual British Columbia Rheumatology Invitation Educational Series (BRIESE) continued online in September but also included the addition of a well-attended, in-person event in Vancouver that saw many rheumatologists safely together in the same room for the first time since the pandemic began. The outstanding program included international guests Dr. Laura Coates, Dr. Andrea Singer, Dr. Alfred Kim, Dr. Jean Lieu and Dr. Sharon Chung. Canadian content was provided by Dr. Kun Huang and Dr. Mahesh Nagarajan. Dr. Nagarajan, Senior Associate Dean, Research Professor, Operations and Logistic Division of the UBC School of Business was our guest speaker for the evening gathering and enlighten-



Dr. Kam Shojania introducing award winners.

ned us with stories and lessons on the intersection of business and medicine.

We also took the opportunity to celebrate some of our finest with the Annual BCSR/UBC Award presentations in September. The Innovation Award was given to Dr. Mo Bardi for his work on ultrasound and giant cell arteritis (GCA). Dr. Daniel Ennis was awarded the UBC BCSR Teaching Award and was named a 2020 UBC Honour Roll Recipient in Clinical Teaching Excellence: Postgraduate Inpatient for his outstanding contributions to the medical training program. Dr. Stuart Seigel received the Advocacy Award. Stuart has been a strong leader for rheumatology in the Okanagan and has been instrumental in creating a collegial and vibrant rheumatology community in Kelowna.

I would also like to congratulate Dr. Kam Shojania on his tenure as the UBC Rheumatology Division Head. As his term nears completion, we know it will be hard to replace his confident leadership and unique brand of humour.



Dr. Stuart Seigel accepts the Advocacy Award.

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