



Canadian Arthritis Research Conference

Living Well: Easing pain through research

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Pain and Rheumatoid Arthritis

Thirty-Five Years of Living With Pain

Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance

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Disclosure

The Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance receives support from multiple pharmaceutical companies, research entities, the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health and government that enable us to conduct our work.

- CAPA is a national, patient driven organization with no full-time employees. Priorities are established by our Board of Directors from across Canada who all live with arthritis and volunteer their time.
- I am a volunteer for CAPA.

Learning Objectives

- Participants will understand the real-world experience of a patient with long standing RA accessing treatments to manage pain
- Advocacy successes by a patient organization organization which led to improved policy for people living with chronic pain caused by arthritis
- Effective treatments Health Care Providers can advocate for that improve the patient experience with RA
- Gaps in the healthcare system that impact health outcomes

Life with long standing RA

- Biologics are life transforming but alone are not sufficient
- Patients left with joint damage and moderate to severe pain from previously unmanaged disease need more
- Wait times for treatments are long and often not accessible



What works

- A good relationship with your physiotherapist
- Access to complementary treatments including acupuncture and massage
- Medications – both prescription and non-prescription
- Psycho-social support for mental health
- Exercise
- Mindfulness, meditation, and relaxation

Accessing what works is not easy

- Access to Physiotherapy in the public health care system is challenging
- Mental Health support essentially non-existent
- Wait times for surgery, pain clinics (where they exist)
- Access to medications; special authorization, co-pays
- Treatments that work are not covered by medicare
- Heavy financial burden on patients and their families for out of pocket costs

Limited pharmaceutical options for pain

- Many patients report success with medical cannabis
- Over the counter drugs - tylenol, ibuprofen, naproxen
- Opioids
- Anti-depressants

Opioids – CAPA'S work from advocacy to action

- Opioid crisis led to increased prescribing scrutiny and restrictive policy change
- No consideration or understanding of policy impact on chronic pain patients
- Letters written to the Minister of Health
- CAPA joins the Opioid Partners Working Group and the Canadian Pain Care Forum

CAPA'S opioid survey

- CAPA conducted a survey of our network to hear about the patient experience
- 264 Responses, with the majority diagnosed over ten years ago
- 75% take or have taken an opioid to treat their pain
- 53% had their doctor speak to them about or tapered their medication
- Presented preliminary results to the Federal Health Minister in November 2018

Opioid policy work (cont'd)

- Poster on Opioid Survey presented at CADTH 2019 Symposium
- Minister announces Canadian Pain Taskforce with two members from the arthritis community (April 2019)
- CAPA Board members participate in Health Canada regional consultations on best practices in pain treatment across the country
- CAPA develops a resource for patients and policy makers from Opioid survey results
- Abstract on pain resources accepted for 2020 Canadian Rheumatology Association Annual Meeting

Spotlight on pain can benefit arthritis

- Prevent acute pain from becoming chronic, early diagnosis/intervention, appropriate treatment
- Improved care for long term disease patients, access to multi-disciplinary clinics, complementary therapies
- Additional research funding

Thank you!



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