

## Linking with industry

By DAVID PHIPPS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, CANADIAN ARTHRITIS NETWORK

When CAN member Dr. Jane Aubin of the University of Toronto identified a nuclear receptor that is involved in bone metabolism, CAN patented this technology. Her discovery is now being validated *in vivo* and is the subject of negotiations for further development with an industrial partner.

CAN's mission is to become a world-leader in developing new diagnostic and therapeutic technologies for arthritis through integrated multi-disciplinary research and development, providing innovative, knowledge-based services in partnership with industry and governments, and enhancing quality of life for people with arthritis.

Dr. Aubin's work is one of many examples of partnerships that are being created to achieve this goal. CAN has also filed a patent on glucosamine derivatives from the lab of Tassos Anastassiades of Queen's University and is in negotiations with a partner to bring this technology to the veterinary market. This technology is currently being validated *in vivo* and a licensee for human applications will be sought. Other projects with commercial potential include antibodies against prostaglandin receptors, interactive arthritis education on CD and a potential new diagnostic marker for rheumatoid arthritis.

In addition to these technologies, CAN's clinical trials group will be conducting a clinical trial in

collaboration with Medexus Inc., a Toronto-based company, for ProSORBA®, a drug free treatment for rheumatoid arthritis in patients with long standing disease. The pre-clinical core facility will be engaging in an animal study in collaboration with another Canadian company, Transition Therapeutics and Diagnostics Inc. CAN also has partnered with ClinTrials BioResearch in Montreal to provide animal services in GLP conditions.

For further information on any of these business opportunities or the services of CAN's clinical trials group and pre-clinical core facility, please contact the CAN administrative core at 416-586-8366.



CANADIAN  
ARTHRITIS  
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LE RÉSEAU  
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DE L'ARTHRITE

# Joint Ventures

The Canadian Arthritis Network's Industry Newsletter

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Dr. Jeff Dixon

Canadian Arthritis Network

Mount Sinai Hospital  
600 University Ave. Rm 1528

Toronto ON M5G 1X5

Tel: 416 586 4770

Fax: 416 586 8395

can@arthritis.ca

www.arthritis.ca/can



A Network of Centres  
of Excellence

## Partnerships in arthritis research

by DR. TONY CRUZ, CAN PROGRAM DIRECTOR AND CEO

Linking over 120 of Canada's leading arthritis researchers and clinicians, the Canadian Arthritis Network (CAN) is expediting the process of R&D and bringing new discoveries to market.

We are one of 18 Networks created by the Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE), Canada's flagship science and technology program. And now, having spent our first operational year successfully creating our infrastructure, we are working to fulfill our mandate to partner with industry and government.

This newsletter has been created to promote and facilitate communication between interested stakeholders. You might have an existing product indicated for another disease and want to see if it has value for the treatment of arthritis, or you might want to create a new diagnostic. You might also need a forum to voice concerns about issues and problems that affect the process of bringing new devices and drugs to market.

We want to help you find the right experts and organizations that you need to make things happen, and provide you with opportunities to facilitate the process.

Since we are a new organization, we are anxious for you to get to know us. Through the nationally based expertise of our

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membership, our core facilities and training programs, we can help your efforts to accelerate developments in arthritis research.

CAN is also in the process of establishing a pre-clinical core facility, a disease management core facility and a national

patient registry for clinical trials, and invite your participation and input in this process to ensure we know how to best meet your needs.

We look forward to your participation in this joint venture. Visit our Web site at [www.arthritis.ca/can](http://www.arthritis.ca/can) or contact us at 416-586-4770.



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Joint Ventures is  
also available in French

Published by the  
Canadian Arthritis Network

Editor:

Christina Marshall  
416 586 4861

Associate Editor:

Matt Taylor  
416 586 4461

Canadian Arthritis Network

Mount Sinai Hospital  
600 University Ave. Rm 1528  
Toronto ON M5G 1X5  
Tel: 416 586 4770  
Fax: 416 586 8395

can@arthritis.ca  
www.arthritis.ca/can

## CAN's Annual Conference in 2001

— a new frontier in arthritis research and development

Looking for an opportunity to learn about the latest developments in arthritis research? Interested in data collection, the development of new treatments and diagnostics? Need to network with members of the public and private sector?

Then join us from September 13 to 15, 2001 in Calgary, Canada at CAN's Annual Conference.

This forum will also be an important opportunity to learn about CAN's multi-disciplinary research projects involving over 120 of Canada's leading arthritis researchers and clinicians, and new developments in our core services.

For details about sponsorship and exhibiting, contact David Phipps at 416-586-8366. For registration information, contact Leigh Gibson at 416-586-8416 or visit our Web site at [www.arthritis.ca/can](http://www.arthritis.ca/can)



## CAN'S CORE FACILITIES

The Canadian Arthritis Network's core facilities provide a wide range of services to pharmaceutical and biotech sectors, government, bioinformatics organizations and marketing companies. These vertically integrated core services — Pre-Clinical Core Facility, Clinical Trials Group and Arthritis Disease Management - ensure smooth transfer of product development, saving time and money in the development process.

### Pre-Clinical Core Facility

- network of laboratories across Canada provides expertise in the utilization of experimental animal models and *in vitro* screening systems for osteoarthritis, inflammatory arthritis and the repair of skeletal tissues
- includes academic centres, contract research organizations, medical institutions and veterinary facilities, combined with the internationally renowned expertise of CAN scientists
- utilizes validated experimental models and screening systems, including pathology, histology, immunohistochemistry, new biomarkers and cutting-edge imaging modalities in non-GLP and GLP conditions

### Clinical Trials Group

- utilizes an alliance of rheumatologists from 16 academic arthritis centres in Canada, plus approximately 75 community rheumatologists
- will develop a registry of arthritis patients to assist clinical trial recruitment
- provides site management services to the clinical trial sponsor
- provides expert consultants, including clinicians experienced in designing, conducting and assessing clinical trials
- in addition, CAN provides expertise in biostatistics, pharmaco-economics, pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics

### Arthritis Disease Management

- first Canadian Web-based portal for arthritis research
- growing resource of core patient registries for total joint replacement, rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis
- comprised of six units: epidemiology, pharmaco-economics, social sciences, outcomes assessment, bio-statistics and data analysis
- provides a well-characterized longitudinal cohort of people with arthritis
- addresses research and survey questions including assessments for new devices, and novel pharmacological or non-pharmacological treatment regimes

For more information, contact David Phipps, executive director of business development at (416) 586-8366

## The NCE: Canada's flagship science and technology program

by PAUL BENNETT, NCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

Sustainable job creation, economic growth, improving quality of life and advancing knowledge – these are the broad objectives of the Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE), of which the Canadian Arthritis Network is an integral component.

Through the creation of national multidisciplinary and multisectoral partnerships, the program successfully integrates the research and development priorities of participants from universities, industry, government, hospitals and other agencies.

A total of 18 Networks have been created since the inception of the NCE program in 1989, in areas that include health and biotechnology, information technology, natural resources, infrastructure and computer-assisted learning.

According to Dr. Gilbert Normand, secretary of state for science, research and development, the emphasis on collaboration rather than competition spurs innovation.

Indeed, the NCEs have dramatically accelerated the exchange of research and development priorities among participants and helped to develop and retain world-class researchers in areas essential to Canada's productivity and economic growth.

A few figures illustrate these successes. During 1999-2000, 563 companies, 138 provincial and federal government departments and agencies, 46 hospitals, 98 universities and 266 other organizations from every province and territory as well as abroad were involved in the NCE program, creating rich and varied synergies.

Thirty-one patents were awarded, 71 licences granted and 14 spin-off companies created. Of more than \$70 million in outside investments generated by NCEs, \$41 million came from participating private sector companies.

...continued on page 3

## Investing in Canada's future researchers

The Canadian Arthritis Network's training program is an opportunity for biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies to invest in Canada's future researchers. By providing matching funding, companies play an active role in the development of potential employees, and at the same time benefit from the opportunity to invest limited funds into a pilot project.

"The training program is a low budget, low risk means of investigating a potential product's viability," says Dr. Michael Buschmann, co-founder of Biosytech Ltd., a Montreal-based bioengineering firm.

Dr. Buschmann, who is also a CAN member, supervises Dr. Leping Li, a post-doctoral fellow at the École Polytechnique. Dr. Li is working with Biosytech on the development of an arthroscopic

probe to diagnose cartilage disease.

The trainee program enables new arthritis researchers to access and acquire combined expertise in basic science, clinical research, product service and development and industrial partnering.

Collaborations with leading investigators in a networked environment expose them to the broad diversity of scientific disciplines involved in arthritis research. The Network's training goal is to develop scientists with a multi disciplinary approach who know and understand the needs of both industry and the arthritis community.

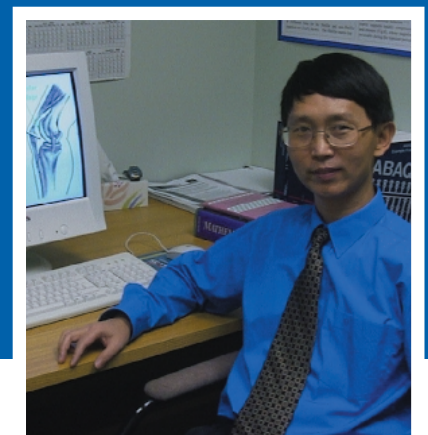
Graduates from the Network's training program can follow a direct path into the biotechnology, medical devices and pharmaceutical industries, where their ability to translate basic

science into new intellectual property for clinical application will provide these sectors with their future leaders.

In partnership with The Arthritis Society and industry, CAN has committed \$6.7 million for training of new investigators.

For more information, contact Dr. Tineke Meijers, executive director of research and development, at (416) 586-4685.

*Dr. Leping Li, with a computer image of the arthroscopic probe.*



...continued from page 2

The Networks have also provided young Canadians with access to the best mentors and the opportunity to work with leaders from the private sector. Ninety percent of Network graduates have found employment, 50 percent in industry and 30 percent in universities.

The NCE program is funded by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSRHC).

For further information, visit the NCE Web site at [www.nce.gc.ca](http://www.nce.gc.ca)

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## Looking for a specialist?

CAN2001 is a catalogue of expertise available from the Canadian Arthritis Network.

To receive a copy, contact Tineke Meijers, executive director of research & development, at (416) 586-4685 or visit [www.arthritis.ca/can/can2001](http://www.arthritis.ca/can/can2001)