



CANADIAN
ARTHRITIS
NETWORK | LE RÉSEAU
CANADIEN
DE L'ARTHRITE

HIGHLIGHTS

■ Research Projects

In 2003, the Canadian Arthritis Network (CAN) funded the first five-year strategic Research Initiative (SRI) grant in Osteoarthritis, followed by SRIs in Inflammatory Joint Diseases and Bioengineering for the Restoration of Joint Function. Millions of dollars have been allocated to these projects that were identified through stakeholder consensus conferences. The work in Osteoarthritis is the furthest along and is being recognized internationally for its excellence. CAN also funds research looking into arthritis in the Aboriginal community, as well as novel, high-risk research, and programs that encourage networking between diverse groups of researchers.

■ CAN's Consumer Model

One of CAN's most notable contributions to the arthritis world is its integration of consumers (informed patients) into its operations and governance. Consumer representatives play a critical role as active collaborators on research projects and valued participants with an equal voice on every CAN committee, council and board. Consumer participation legitimizes and makes relevant the arthritis research being performed by CAN investigators. The knowledge gained from consumers is invaluable information for an organization that is determined to improve the quality of life for those living with arthritis.

■ Annual Scientific Conference

CAN's Annual Scientific Conference (ASC) is its premiere networking event and its content, format and breadth have evolved over the years to make the conference a key event for the Canadian arthritis community. Each symposium within the conference program focuses on a priority area of interest to conference delegates, and presenters mirror CAN's diverse membership: every panel includes a basic scientist, a clinical researcher, a population health or community health research perspective, a trainee, a consumer and an industry or government representative. This format reflects the importance CAN places

on multi-disciplinary research and collaboration as well as the benefits of multiple perspectives in all arthritis projects. Prior to the ASC, CAN and The Arthritis Society host a free public forum for members of the public to hear from experts and learn about emerging trends in arthritis research.

■ Training Programs

Through funding from CAN and The Arthritis Society, undergraduate, graduate, postdoctoral fellows and scholars have been offered scholarships, training rotations, opportunities in academic and industrial settings, international exchanges and summer research placements with industry. The training program also provides career development to round out the education that trainees receive from their institutions and supervisors. Trainees are the next generation of arthritis researchers and Canada's hope for a cure.

■ International Partnership Initiative

In 2007, CAN was one of only seven networks in Canada to be chosen by the Networks of Centres of Excellence to receive funding for a newly launched International Partnership Initiative (IPI). The program aims to encourage the sharing of expertise and knowledge amongst the best arthritis researchers around the globe and to promote research excellence in Canada to an international audience. The IPI offers funding for the following: sending investigators and trainees to academic and industry labs outside of Canada; sending Consumer Advisory Council members to special international meetings and workshops to promote and explain CAN's unique consumer model; and providing funding to initiate collaborative research opportunities with overseas partners. Current partnerships exist with the Arthritis Research Campaign (UK), the Nuffield Foundation (UK), The Arthritis Foundation (USA), the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JPN) and the AO Foundation (SUI).