

active

Issue 3 A worthy joint venture

- Get your rheumatic patients back to work
- International experts at the vanguard of diagnostic imaging
- Give your patients tools which really speak to them

Inside this edition of your **ACTIVE** newsletter: We'll take you to Niagara-on-the-Lake to learn about an innovative imaging workshop in spondyloarthropathy. You'll find out about some interesting Abbott initiatives to get your patients back in the workforce, and help them better cope with their disease. MyHealthMyFuture.ca, a useful patient-oriented website created and sponsored by Abbott, will be introduced as a support tool that is only a click away. All this and more in this issue of **ACTIVE**, your rheumatology newsletter.

Working together to get patients **back to work**



A new report entitled **Fit for Work?** from the UK-based **Work Foundation** highlights the dire impact of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) on the Canadian workforce. MSDs affect the productivity and labour participation of many working-age patients, impacting not only individuals and families, but business and society as well.¹

Sponsored by an unrestricted grant from Abbott, the report provides actionable insights for health care professionals, government, and employers to improve productivity of patients with conditions like rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and spondyloarthropathy (SpA). The **Fit for Work?** project is part of a wider work program in 24 countries across Europe and elsewhere, and draws on academic research and expert interviews to offer recommendations.¹

The report highlights some interesting facts and figures:¹

About 215,000 Canadians have RA. Arthritis-associated lost productivity averaged \$11,553 per person per year; over 40% of this loss was due to reduced performance at work.

The Arthritis Society estimates that **between 150,000 and 300,000 Canadians have ankylosing spondylitis (AS);** the mean annual cost of AS per patient is just over \$9,000.

Individuals with MSDs are likely to have **depression or anxiety problems** related to their conditions; this can impact the length of time patients remain at work, and the ease with which they can be rehabilitated.

Continued on page 2...

Fit for Work? proposes certain guiding principles to stakeholders to improve the working lives of Canadians with MSDs, including:¹⁻⁴

Treat early.

A delay in diagnosis and treatment can make recovery, job retention and rehabilitation more difficult. Evidence suggests that the longer a patient is away from work, the more difficult it is for him/her to return.

Imaginative design is the key to rehabilitation.

Managers can modify the patient's work (including simple changes to time arrangements) to help prevent worsening of MSDs. They need to do this in a way which preserves job quality and leverage ergonomic good practice.

Focus on capacity, not incapacity.

Most workers with MSDs can continue to contribute at work—if allowed to. They need not be 100% fit to return to work – a little creative thinking can allow employers to give patients useful tasks to facilitate the journey back to full productive capacity.

Think beyond the physical.

Clinicians need to remember that a job may play a beneficial role in helping someone stay active and avoid isolation. GPs should be on the lookout for early presentation of MSD symptoms, and refer to specialists as early as possible to enable appropriate disease management.

The **Fit for Work?** report is quite timely and comes on the heels of the upcoming release of recommendations by the Alliance for the Canadian Arthritis Program (ACAP), an umbrella organization representing 30 arthritis stakeholders.¹

To view the full **Fit for Work?** report, go to www.fitforworkeurope.eu/research.htm

August 2010 At the vanguard of diagnostic imaging: International experts explore MRI use in spondyloarthropathy (SpA).

Set against the beautiful backdrop of Niagara-on-the-Lake, an international group of rheumatologists and radiologists met to discuss MRI use in SpA diagnosis and monitoring in August 2010.

Sponsored by Abbott and led by rheumatologist Dr. Walter Maksymowych and radiologist Dr. Robert Lambert, this two-day workshop enabled the two specialties to dialogue at real-life 'imaging stations' and share perspectives on analyzing MRIs of the spine and sacroiliac joints. Each station was manned by an imaging

expert, and participants were asked to bring three MRIs of challenging patient cases for discussion to maximize experience and learning. Comments on the event from attendants were unanimously positive. Physicians appreciated being able to rotate between stations and have a chance to understand the different perspectives between the radiologists. One of the main observations was that, even between the top worldwide experts, there were some differences in the way MRIs are interpreted.

Participants said that the workshop was one of the best they had ever attended, and a valuable training opportunity. Some rheumatologists felt they were now in a better position to evaluate MRIs than some radiologists.

Discussions are currently underway to develop this workshop on a broader geographic level.

Abbott is pleased to be a sponsor of this worthwhile endeavour to improve diagnosis and management of SpA disease.

Abbott has once again demonstrated its commitment to ensuring the highest standards of continuing medical education by supporting this MRI workshop with an unrestricted educational grant. It is a distinct pleasure to work with such a dedicated and enthusiastic group of people. Because of Abbott's support Canadian rheumatologists can enjoy the highest standards of CME available anywhere internationally.

Their disease, their perspective.

Innovative research from Abbott crafts a new educational booklet/DVD series for patients

As you know, patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA), ankylosing spondylitis (AS) or psoriatic arthritis (PsA) can feel overwhelmed by their symptoms and discouraged by progression of their condition. To understand how to best talk to patients about rheumatic disease, Abbott undertook extensive research on a patient's typical **emotional journey**—including relevant challenges, frustrations, and behaviours he/she experiences.

This invaluable research culminated in a series of educational booklets and interactive DVDs, helping patients deal with their condition and work with family, friends and health care team to manage RA, AS and PsA.



A journey into their mind

Abbott explored patients' emotional state at different stages of disease—including pre-diagnosis, diagnosis, treatment and clinical remission. Patients were asked how they managed their condition through the different phases, and how treatments fit into their lives. Relationships with the health care team were also explored.

Once the data was collected, Abbott consulted a nurse advisory panel, which in turn provided suggestions on how to best leverage findings in patient material. Their feedback helped contour the structure and tone of the final brochures and DVDs.

This series, now available for your patients, stresses the

importance of seeking support from family and friends, and working together with their health care team to create and monitor a treatment plan.

Personal case studies and triumphs are included on the DVDs to bring an intimate aspect to the dialogue, and reinforce to the patient that they are not alone.

For more information on this series,
talk to your Abbott representative.



They've got a friend in MyHealthMyFuture.ca

In rheumatic disease, the most important questions can be the ones patients are afraid or embarrassed to ask. Created and sponsored by Abbott, **MyHealthMyFuture.ca** gives patients an avenue to find the intimate information and answers they're looking for. With online advice from Canadian experts in rheumatology and psychology, the site is another helping hand for your patient, just a mouse-click away.



McGill nurse practitioner support

Abbott recognizes the importance of nurse practitioners, which is why they have given a recent **unrestricted grant** to the McGill School of Nursing of **\$100,000**.

This grant helps defray costs related to infrastructure, translation of course material, and teaching and student support.⁵

 Happy holidays from the Abbott team

References:

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We hope you have enjoyed this edition of **ACTIVE**, a newsletter dedicated to the Canadian rheumatology community.

If you would like more information on any of the topics discussed, wish to contribute to a future issue, or simply want to give us your feedback, please contact muriel.haraoui@abbott.com