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The CanVECTOR Network is a pan-Canadian, patient-oriented, Community Development Program centered on venous thromboembolism-related research, training, and knowledge translation.

Recap: Our 1st Annual Conference

Over the last year of CanVECTOR's infancy, we focused on start-up activities to ensure that the network would be built on a strong foundation. In the midst of the bustling activity, no other event motivated us or kept us busy like the 1st Annual Conference.

The inaugural CanVECTOR Annual Conference was held in Toronto, Ontario from June 8th to June 9th at the DoubleTree by Hilton Toronto Downtown hotel. There were over 90 in attendance, a diverse and interdisciplinary group including Network members, research personnel, patients, and partner representatives.

The 2-day conference began bright and early on June 8th. After an opening presentation given by Dr. Susan Kahn, the agenda was kicked off by our keynote speaker, Dr. Dean Fergusson. He spoke about the conduct of large, efficient pragmatic trials, and how these could reduce the burden associated with clinical trials.

The Patient Partners platform organized a

workshop on training researchers to work with patient partners, led by Caroline Wong, Executive Manager of the Centre of Excellence for Partnership with Patients and the Public. The workshop discussed many introductory concepts to working with patients in research. Five of CanVECTOR's patient partners were in attendance and shared their personal stories, which moved the audience and added another perspective with which to view research objectives and goals.

Our Network has certainly emphasized the importance of engaging all stakeholders through our communications. An interactive presentation was given on our various communication channels, with emphasis put on social media! With



Dr. Dean Fergsson delivering the keynote address



CanVECTOR's awarded trainees from left to right: Dr. Jameel Abdulrehman, Dr. Adi Klil-Drori, Dr. Rick Ikesaka, and Dr. Leslie Skeith



Research coordinators discussing data management challenges during break-out session



Dr. Marc Rodger hosting at the Partner Recognition and Network Awards Reception



Patient partner Brian Clark telling his story



Friends having fun with our gorgeous backdrop!

Recap: Our 1st Annual Conference (cont'd)

many attendees being new to platforms like Twitter, the goal was to demonstrate that these platforms are easy to use and navigate. Our self-proclaimed "young researcher" Dr. Marc Carrier live tweeted and showed why Twitter is a resource for CanVECTOR to take advantage of.

Throughout the conference, we also heard presentations from each CanVECTOR platform. Co-leads explained what their respective platform was all about, described their individual mandates and objectives, and provided examples of research projects planned or in progress. Breakout sessions in the afternoon allowed for each platform to meet with their working groups and have newcomers sit in. Simultaneously, there was an organized breakout session for research coordinators to discuss topics and issues that are important to them.

After a day packed with intellectual discussion, all attendees were invited to the Partner Recognition and Network Awards Reception. Light refreshments were served as we thanked our partners. Notably, the representatives in attendance were recognized: Randy Leeder and Joel Bathe from LEO Pharma; Michele Mercuri and Cathy Chen from Daiichi-Sankyo; Meryem Maoui from Sanofi; Richard Godin from BMS; Philip Berry from Pfizer; and Damon Goodwin from Aspen Pharma. Each of the awarded CanVECTOR Trainees was announced and presented with a certificate (see photo). Another exciting announcement was the reveal of the winners of the first Pilot Trial Competition. Two pilots were funded this round: one will be led by Dr. Leslie Skeith, and the other will be led by Dr. Lisa Duffett.

The eventful day ended with a group dinner outing at JOEY Restaurant. A pleasant sit-down meal was shared over nice conversation. Dr. Marc Rodger made a very kind and memorable speech acknowledging the leadership of his "CanVECTOR spouse" and co-Director.

The 2nd day of the conference was dedicated to the mentorship workshop, led by Dr. Mamta Gautam from the Canadian Medical Association Physician Leadership Institute. This day long workshop covered theories and practices of mentorship, and commenced the work to construct the CanVECTOR mentorship program.

There was a booth set up in the lobby for Clots Matter. Clots Matter is a non-profit organization sponsored by Thrombosis Canada to help build Canadian patient advocates and to educate on vascular illnesses. Its founder, Martin R. Lemieux, was at the booth distributing pins and interviewing people on why clots matter to them. A produced video will be available shortly. If you're interested in learning more about Martin, make sure to read *Have You Met Martin?* on page 4.

All in all, CanVECTOR's 1st Annual Conference was a great success! While we received mostly positive feedback, we're already reflecting on ways to improve for next year. For those who were unable to attend or would like to re-visit some of the presentations, PDF versions of the presentations will be made available on Dropbox, as well as photos from the event.

We thank you all for your participation and enthusiasm for CanVECTOR. We can't wait to meet with you all again next year!

Project Updates

1. PAUSE STUDY

PI: Dr. Jim Douketis

Status: Active, recruiting patients

Number of study sites: 20 sites in Canada and the U.S.

Patients recruited: 1,157 of 3,291 expected

Study objectives

To establish a safe, standardized protocol with acceptably low rates of perioperative major bleeding (MB) and arterial thromboembolism (ATE), for the perioperative management of patients with atrial fibrillation (AF) who are receiving either dabigatran, rivaroxaban, or apixaban, and require an elective surgery/procedure

Interesting facts

There are an equal number of patients in each new oral anticoagulant arm (NOAC) with 35% of patients having a surgery/procedure that is high risk for bleeding.

2. COBRRRA PILOT STUDY

PI: Dr. Lana Castellucci and Dr. Marc Rodger

Status: Active, recruiting patients

Number of study sites: 4 in Canada

Patients recruited: 40 of 72 expected

Study objectives

The primary objective of the study is to determine if it is feasible to conduct a large randomized multi-center trial comparing apixaban vs. rivaroxaban for the treatment of acute VTE.

Interesting facts

At the Ottawa site, compliance is also being assessed with the use of electronic monitoring devices. The eCaps system is composed of a SmartCap and reader. The eCaps will record and imprint the time of opening the medication container on multiple occasions. This method of recording data on adherence will provide preliminary data about rates of non-compliance and will be compared to the conventional methods of self-reporting and pill count for efficacy and safety.

3. DABI-PTS STUDY

PI: Dr. Sam Schulman and Dr. Susan Kahn

Status: Active, recruiting patients

Number of study sites: 19 in Canada, 3 in Norway, and 5-6 in Sweden (Denmark pending)

Patients recruited: 35 of 693 expected

Study objectives

The primary objective is to assess the prevalence of post-thrombotic syndrome (PTS) in the two treatment arms of the RE-COVER studies using the recently developed patient-reported Villalta (PRV) Scale.

4. STEP-CAT STUDY

PI: Dr. Vicky Tagalakis

Status: Active, recruiting patients

Number of study sites: 1 active site and 6 sites working on local approvals. Open to 1 more new site

Patients recruited: 0 of 150 expected

Study objectives

To determine the rate of recurrent VTE in patients receiving prophylactic dose enoxaparin for cancer-associated thrombosis (CAT) after completing a minimum of 3-6 months of weight-adjusted LMWH therapy and to determine the safety profile of prophylactic dose enoxaparin for treatment of CAT after completing a minimum of 3-6 months of weight adjusted LMWH therapy.

Interesting facts

STEP-CAT has been added to the Canadian Cancer Clinical Trials Network (3CTN) portfolio. This means that sites can seek extra funding from the network per patient enrolled once they enrol above their projected baseline number of participants.

5. RAPS STUDY

PI: Dr. Mark Crowther

Status: Active, recruiting patients

Number of study sites: 6

Patients recruited: 76 of 135 expected

Study objectives

To assess the feasibility of a larger study designed to address clinical endpoints. Will also provide estimates of event rates.

Interesting facts

Heart and Stroke Foundation funding will expire on July 1, 2017 and as a result it has been decided to terminate recruitment at the end of September 2016. The study will demonstrate that the proposed design proposed is infeasible if the goal is to enrol sufficient patients to have high quality estimates of the efficacy and safety of rivaroxaban in these patients. However, it will provide an estimate (albeit imprecise) of the rate of thrombosis in such patients and its data will be combined with results from other studies to enhance the precision of the estimate of the efficacy and safety of rivaroxaban.

6. EPCAT II STUDY

PI: Dr. David Anderson

Status: Active, closed to recruitment

Number of study sites: 15

Patients recruited: 3,427 of 3,426 expected

Study objectives

- 1) To determine whether extending the duration of antithrombotic prophylaxis for 30 days following total hip arthroplasty (THA) or 9 days following total knee arthroplasty (TKA) (after an initial course of rivaroxaban up to and including POD#5) with aspirin is at least as effective as rivaroxaban for preventing symptomatic VTE.
- 2) To determine the safety of this regimen as determined by rates of clinically relevant bleeding complications.
- 3) To compare the cost-effectiveness of this regimen

Interesting facts

Recruitment was faster than projected and therefore finished approximately 4 months early! Most sites are already interested and talking about EPCAT III!



My goal is to be able to help as many patients as I can. The only way I can achieve that goal is by immersing myself in the latest research and by surrounding myself with the people and knowledge necessary to accomplish that goal — **Martin Lemieux**

Patient Spotlight: *Have You Met Martin?*

1. What are 5 words that best describe you?

Passionate, Compassionate, Motivated, Loving, and Fearless

2. What are you most proud of?

Since I was 18, I have owned and operated four businesses. I pride myself on creating and building upon ideas for the future. For over 12 years, I helped hundreds of small companies to achieve their goals.

I personally built a network of websites, one of which was an author's club with over 30,000+ members, who submitted over 1.5 million articles. My network received over 2,000,000 unique visitors a month. One website was in the top 5,000 most visited in the world. My tips on marketing a business have been published on thousands of entrepreneurial websites, including more than a few front page articles from some of the most influential "web-pro" news centers in the world.

Aside from being an entrepreneur, my greatest achievement to date is my son. He is and forever will be my gift to the world.

3. What does an average day in your life look like?

My days are very long. They usually start between 4-7am since my legs don't allow for any formal sleeping habit. It will typically take between 20-40 minutes before my medications take effect and the extreme pain in my lower limbs subsides.

My mornings are peaceful and quiet. I like to sit with a coffee and glass of water while returning messages, emails, and reading through online posts of interest.

Research is crucial throughout the day. I am a student of life, to learn and explore anything that can better my understanding of living a better quality of life and how to become a better person for those within my circle. At night I enjoy some music, playing piano and acoustic guitar, working on projects on the go and visiting friends.

4. Why did you want to get involved with the CanVECTOR Network?

I found CanVECTOR through my work as the Patient Ambassador for Thrombosis Canada. My goal is to be able to help as many patients as I can. The only way I can achieve that goal is by immersing myself in the latest research and by surrounding myself with the people and knowledge necessary to accomplish that goal.

When I was younger, I was fortunate enough to participate in studies that ultimately helped make anticoagulants more available to patients worldwide. This learning experience taught me the importance of these studies and the impact it has within the thrombosis community.

The more I can help the thrombosis community to advance treatment knowledge for current and future patients, the better I can help patients within Canada through a time of their life that can be very scary, unforgiving and uncompromising.

The CanVECTOR Network allows Patient Partners the opportunity to help make a difference in our ever-growing community.

5. Any fun facts?

I'm really just a fun loving guy. I enjoy anything extreme (i.e. skydiving, rollercoasters, motorcycles, etc.). I try to go to as many concerts as I can afford since I have a deep love for music. I like to make people laugh, even if it means being so silly that people have no option but to shake their heads in laughter. Oh, and my pain is my friend, it reminds me to live a life worth living.

About Martin Lemieux:

Martin Lemieux is currently building a non-profit organization called Clots Matter - helping to build Canadian patient advocates within the Thrombosis Community. Martin works as the Patient Ambassador for Thrombosis Canada and is also a Patient Partner with CanVECTOR.

Feel free to follow Martin on Twitter @Martin_Lemieux and/or @ClotsMatter

News and Opportunities



A partnership between the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians (CAEP) and CanVECTOR will support one \$5,000 grant and one \$250 abstract award each year for the next five CAEP Research Competitions. The CAEP-CanVECTOR Grant is for a research project that aims to reduce VTE occurrence, improve VTE diagnosis and therapeutic management, improve the safety of anticoagulant delivery, or enhance the quality of life of those impacted by VTE in the emergency care setting.

Information on how to apply is available at www.caep.ca



CanVECTOR members Dr. Bill Geerts and Dr. Rita Selby were recently published in *Blood*. Congratulations!

Find it with this citation:

Reducing the hospital burden of heparin-induced thrombocytopenia: impact of an avoid-heparin program. McGowan KE, Makari J, Diamantouros A, Bucci C, Rempel P, Selby R, Geerts W. *Blood*. 2016 Apr 21;127(16):1954-9.



Coming Soon:

The 12th Annual McMaster Update in Thromboembolism and Hemostasis (a CanVECTOR partner) will be held on Friday, October 14th, 2016. There is one CanVECTOR Fellow Award available to attend this meeting. The award will cover registration fees and provide funds for travel to the meeting. Information on how to apply will be communicated soon.



World Thrombosis Day is October 13th. You can join the global movement by planning or participating in an event at worldthrombosisday.org

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CanVECTOR Network

Do you have news, accomplishments, or pictures you'd like to share with the CanVECTOR community? Send them to us at info@canvector.ca for the chance to be featured!



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