

## Hellos and Goodbyes!



We are so happy to welcome to the team our new social worker Karen Hodge, and nurse Kaija Gnazdowsky. The research team has also welcomed Cynthia Chan, Arnima Singh and Nick McPhate. We are grateful to have all your expertise on our team!

Sadly, we had to say goodbye to nurse Indy Toor, research coordinator Else Bosman, and pediatric training fellow/locum rheumatologist Dr. Dalal Mohammad this May. We will also say goodbye to training fellow Dr. Shamma Alzaabi this August. We wish them all the best!

**MICYRN**  
better health for mothers and children

## RareKids-CAN Network

Pediatric Rare Disease Clinical Trials and Treatment Network was funded! This is a new national network including Drs. Tucker and Cabral from our group that is aiming to develop the capacity for Canadian centers to support clinical trials for children with rare diseases. The RareKids-CAN network will foster collaboration among researchers, patients, caregivers, health-care providers, and policy makers to streamline clinical research and support national and international clinical trials being conducted in Canada.



### Interested in learning more?

- **BCCH Rheumatology** <https://www.bcchr.ca/rheumatology>
- **Cassie + Friends** <https://cassieandfriends.ca>
- **CAPRI JIA Registry** <https://www.capricanada.org>
- **Vasculitis Foundation** <https://www.vasculitisfoundation.org>

If you have any questions or are interested in participating in our research studies, you can contact us at [rheumresearch@phsa.ca](mailto:rheumresearch@phsa.ca)



## Rheumatology Research Newsletter

For patients and their families  
Volume 20, Issue 1  
Summer 2024



Welcome to the Summer 2024 Rheumatology Research Newsletter! Every year, our team takes part in many different research projects, all with the common goal of improving the quality of life for children with rheumatic disease. We are so excited to share with you what we have been working on, and what is to come. We would also like to thank all the families who have participated in research. Without you, these studies would not be possible. Happy reading!



### Cassie + Friends Run Recap

Thank you to everyone who showed their support at the annual Cassie + Friends run! The Vancouver C+F Team raised over **\$61,000** for family support programs and research, and helped bring awareness to childhood rheumatic diseases.

**Stay tuned to join the team next year!**

# Mental Health Screening in Pediatric Rheumatology



Congratulations to Sarah James, our occupational therapist, who is one of the winners of the inaugural C&W Practice-based Research Challenge! She is leading a study to evaluate the feasibility of anxiety and depression screening for our patients aged 8 to 17 years old with juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA) as a part of routine clinic visits.

JIA is the most common rheumatic disease of childhood, and we know from previous research that children with JIA experience more symptoms of anxiety and depression than their peers without a chronic health condition. These symptoms can hinder enjoyment of activities, independence, and more. Researchers and clinicians are searching for the best ways to implement support for kids and teenagers experiencing these challenges.

This study will help the team see how common anxiety and depressive symptoms are, and better understand the specific mental health needs in our clinic population. We hope that the findings can help improve the services we provide to best support the social and emotional wellbeing of youth with JIA.

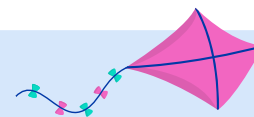


## The Brown Lab



Congratulations to Dr. Kimberly Morishita and Dr. Kelly Brown who have won the Lung Health Research Grants 2023 Competition to study lung involvement in pediatric ANCA associated vasculitis!

If you are interested in learning about the research taking place in the Dr. Brown lab and how it is impacting our treatment of rheumatic disease, head to [kbrownlab.ca](https://kbrownlab.ca) for more information!



## What is a clinical trial?

Clinical trials are the research studies for newly developed drugs to see if they are effective for a particular condition, and safe with no serious side effects. There are many new drugs becoming available to treat rheumatic diseases. Most clinical trials are done in adults, and later in children. Clinical trials provide our patients an opportunity for early access to these drugs that are often already being used by adults or elsewhere in the world, but still need approval for children in Canada. If they are as effective as we hope, they become approved and can be marketed and covered by health insurance. Drugs commonly used today, including methotrexate, adalimumab, infliximab, and tocilizumab, are available to our patients because others volunteered to participate in clinical trials.



## Upcoming Trials



**Poly-JIA study:** This study is using upadacitinib (a “JaK” inhibitor – not a biologic) for treating children with JIA who have more than 4 joints with active arthritis. The potential benefit of this drug is that is a pill rather than an injection and it may be as good as, or more effective than biologic drugs.

**Knapsack Study:** This study will use a biologic treatment that should uniquely target the inflammation that causes psoriatic JIA. Although it involves an injection, after the first few shots it is only given every 3 months. The process to start this trial is still underway.

**BLOSSOM Study:** This study is investigating the safety and effectiveness of an IV biologic medication called anifrolumab in kids aged 5 to 17 years with systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) while on standard therapy. This study aims to establish dosing regimens and evaluate the drugs tolerability and efficacy in kids.