

The Canadian Society of Clinical Pharmacology – from Founding to Merger

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The Canadian Society of Pharmacology and Therapeutics (CSPT) has been recognized by the International Union of Basic and Clinical Pharmacology (IUPHAR) as the voice of Canadian Pharmacology. CSPT in its current form was created in Hamilton, Ontario on July 1st, 2008 as a result of the merger of the Pharmacological Society of Canada (PSC) with the Canadian Society for Clinical Pharmacology (CSCP). The merger documents were signed by Dr. James Hammond (President, PSC) and Dr. Micheline Piquette-Miller (President, CSCP), with Dr. James Hammond being the first President of the newly created merged Society, followed by Dr Richard Kim a year later. This established the tradition in our Society of a basic and clinical pharmacologist alternating as the Society's President.

The Canadian Society for Clinical Pharmacology (CSCP), one of the two parent organizations, was formed as a result of discussions between clinical investigators at the annual meeting of the Canadian Society for Clinical Investigation in Ottawa, being followed by the formal creation and incorporation of the CSCP in February of 1983. The initial seeds of the CSCP was planted in 1978 at a memorable meeting in Gothenburg, Sweden in 1978 supported by Astra Pharmaceuticals. A number of prominent Canadian clinical investigators attended the meeting and conversations were held as to the need for a national society focused on clinical pharmacology.

The discussions in Gothenburg were driven in large part driven by the evolution of therapeutic research in Canada as the fruits of the Therapeutic Revolution brought new drugs and new approaches to therapy to the front lines of health care. In 1964 the Canadian Foundation for the Advancement of Therapeutics held a workshop at Ste. Adèle-en-Haut to promote drug research and the development of clinical pharmacology. Developments following this workshop included the creation of the Clinical Pharmacology Oenophile Society in 1974 at a meeting in Montréal and the establishment of a clinical pharmacology unit by Dr. John Ruedy at the Montreal General Hospital as well as a formal residency program in Clinical Pharmacology. The culmination of these efforts was the decisions by the attendees of the meeting in Gothenburg to create a new Society.

Over the course of 1979 the founders of the new Society were busy finding potential members and gathering support for the new Society. CSCP was informally founded with Dr. Dick Ogilvie as President, Dr. Stuart MacLeod as Secretary Treasurer and Drs. Bill Mahon, Fred Aoki and George Carruthers as Councillors. After the formal founding of CSCP in 1983 the Society continued to evolve. One early major achievement of the Society was the recognition of Clinical Pharmacology as a formal sub-speciality by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada in 1986. Canada was one of the first countries to formalize and certify training in Clinical Pharmacology as a model cross-disciplinary bridging discipline.

Over the next several decades CSCP continued to evolve, including establishing a permanent society office and creating a number of awards acknowledging achievements in research and service, spanning the career path from trainee to senior investigator. The CSCP developed a formal relationship with the Royal College, including having a CSCP member as formal liaison serving on the Royal College national Residency Program Advisory Committee. Formal residency programs in Clinical Pharmacology, accredited by the Royal College, were created at McGill, University of Toronto and the University of Western Ontario.

CSCP organized an annual meeting that for years was held concurrently with the September annual meeting of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. A decision by the Royal College to change the direction of their annual meeting to focus almost entirely on education meant that CSCP had to re-consider with whom and when the Society met from 2000 forward. As a consequence, - and a welcome consequence – over the past 18 years CSCP has held an independent annual meeting both independently and also with a number of partner societies including the American Society of Clinical Pharmacology & Therapeutics, the Canadian College of Clinical Pharmacy and the Canadian Association for Population Therapeutics, in the latter two cases organizing several joint Canadian Therapeutic Congresses.

The Pharmacological Society of Canada (PSC) was the older of the two societies, having been organized by members of the various Departments of Pharmacology in Canada with a primary interest in basic pharmacology. The roots of the PSC go back to 1824, when the first Department of Pharmacology in Canada was founded at McGill as the Discipline of Chemistry, Pharmacy and Materia Medica, assuming the name Department of Pharmacology in 1887. Over the following years a number of Departments of Materia Medica/Pharmacology were created at other Canadian medical schools including Queen's, the University of Western Ontario and the University of Toronto.

The PSC was active for many years, holding annual meetings from 1957 on. A particular highlight was in 1994 when PSC hosted the IUPHAR World Congress of Pharmacology in Montréal. As well PSC also had a number of awards recognizing achievements in research in pharmacology.

As both Societies evolved it became increasingly clear that there were advantages to bringing basic and clinical pharmacology together, notably given prominent international examples such as the British Pharmacologic Society, the conversation beginning in Québec City between the then-Presidents Drs. Stuart MacLeod (CSCP) and Kanji Nakatsu (PSC). It was recognized that this was an important factor was that many academic investigators were in fact members of both societies. As well, the size of both Societies was such that it was felt that key events such as the annual meetings would be better served by a merged society. Finally the evolution of drug discovery, investigation and evaluation was increasingly recognized to be a multi-disciplinary enterprise best suited to an organization with broad based membership encompassing a wide of expertise in basic and clinical pharmacology.

As the discussions with both Societies proceeded it was clear that there were many benefits from a merger. The final agreement was made at the *CPT 2008 IX World Conference on Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics* that was organized and hosted by CSCP and NSERC under the auspices of the IUPHAR which was held in Québec City in 2008. Consequently preparation for the merger proceeded smoothly, including developing an awards suite that recognized the traditions of both Societies and the drafting of a new set of by-laws by Dr. James Hammond, our inaugural President.

As noted above, CSPT has been recognized by IUPHAR as the Voice of Canadian Pharmacology, fostering the application of educational and research excellence to drug discovery and therapeutic choice by bringing together as a Society a multidisciplinary group of individuals with broad interests in optimally safe and effective drug therapy.

Since the creation of the CSPT the tradition of joint meetings with partner Societies has continued and indeed grown. CSPT has held joint meetings with a number of groups including the Safety Pharmacology Society, the Canadian Society of Pharmaceutical Science and the Canadian Chapter of the Controlled Release Society. These have been great successes, an example being our joint meeting in 2018 in Toronto where outstanding research in basic, clinical and translational pharmacology was presented in integrated joint symposia. The plans for future meetings are to continue and to grow our tradition of joint meetings. The Society has maintained its relationship with the Royal College and the clinical pharmacology training programs.

CSPT has evolved as the regulatory and research environments have evolved, and is becoming increasingly involved in education in pharmacology and therapeutics. As the therapeutic revolution in biological, cellular and protein therapy evolves CSPT will continue to advocate for and work with outstanding teams of investigators pushing the frontiers of pharmacology and therapeutics.

References

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