

Lupus Research Institute Presents Data Showing Innovative Professional Education Program is Highly Effective

The Lupus Research Institute (LRI) presented data from the [Teaching Fellows in Lupus Project](#) at the 2015 American College of Rheumatology's (ACR) annual meeting. The innovative project enlisted rheumatology fellows – specialists in training – to educate primary and emergency healthcare providers to better recognize the signs and symptoms of lupus.

Why Educating Healthcare Providers about Lupus is so Important

Healthcare providers in primary and emergency care may only get about 45 minutes of training on lupus in all of medical school. When lupus goes undiagnosed, the patient faces poorer outcomes and an increased risk of death. With improved lupus knowledge, providers can increase the speed of referral to rheumatologists for diagnosis and treatment.

Project Overview

The project was a part of the ACR's [The Lupus Initiative®](#) and was funded through a one year grant from the Office of Minority Health's National Health Education Program on Lupus for Healthcare Providers. Pilot sites and participants were Dr. Sam Lim of Emory University in Atlanta, Dr. Rosalind Ramsey-Goldman of Northwestern University in Chicago, Dr. Amanda Sammut of Health and Hospitals Corporation in New York City, and Dr. Maria Dall'Era of the University of California San Francisco. Local support for seminar scheduling and administration was provided by the ACR, the Lupus Society of Illinois, the S.L.E. Lupus Foundation/Lupus Research Institute, and the Lupus Foundation of Northern California respectively.

For the project, rheumatology fellows delivered an in person seminar to providers in primary and emergency care using presentations developed from existing materials from [The Lupus Initiative®](#).

The goal of the project was to create a successful model for lupus education.

Broad Reach in Four Key Cities

- 660 healthcare providers attended a seminar
- 31 seminars were held
- 24 rheumatology fellows participated

Significant Knowledge Gained by Participating Providers

- Average knowledge assessment score increased from 6.1 to 7.6 (out of 10) measured by a voluntary assessment taken before and after the seminar

Majority of Providers Gained Confidence in Lupus Competencies

- 92% gained confidence in recognizing the signs and symptoms of lupus
- 89% gained confidence in appropriately referring patients to the right specialist

Fellows in Rheumatology CAN Serve as Lupus Educators

- 96% of participating providers were satisfied with the seminar content
- 88% of participating providers are likely to attend another seminar led by a fellow

- 100% of participating fellows had a positive experience

In addition, participating fellows gained required competencies under the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, and local providers that attended a seminar were able to build stronger linkages to specialty care.

If you are a Program Director, Educator, or Fellow:

A step-by-step [Implementation Guide](#) and resources are available for use to implement this project locally. All resources are flexible and can be tailored to serve local needs.

Future Efforts Based on Proven Success

Based on the Teaching Fellows in Lupus Project success, the LRI received a grant from the Office of Minority Health to build upon the program with the launch of the [Lupus Education Advancement Project \(LEAP\)](#). Continuing to educate providers in primary and emergency care, LEAP goes further to overcome specific barriers to patient referrals within different types of healthcare networks. LEAP activities will also include the launch of a pediatric education project, a public awareness campaign in English and Spanish, and a series of Facebook chats for the online community to get questions answered by rheumatologists.