

RTNA Sponsored Attendance Report by Austin Mardon, C.M.

**Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technology in Health Conference:
Evidence, Decisions, Outcomes**

April 5- 7, 2009.

I arrived in the afternoon of Sunday April 5th booked in and then attended the reception that was held in a room with the posters. They were interesting and from a variety of perspectives. I was most interested in the one on consumer action in drug selection for arthritis. I do not come from a medical background but from geography. Some of the more technical posters were above my head but I understood the gist of many of them and talked with several of the presenters. Many of the people there knew each other obviously from previous conferences. This was my first conference.

My conclusion from the conference was that there should be a greater consumer and patient input in the selection of drugs and medications for ultimate use. It surprised me that so many of the presenters said that the scientific validity of treatments was in many cases a minor factor in the selection for their ultimate use and that other social and political factors. Also what might be true from one scientific perspective might result in an opposite result from a different scientific perspective.

I was disappointed by the sparse presentations from the patient perspective.

Having been deeply involved with getting various neuraleptics onto the formulary for my fellow schizophrenics I was disturbed that the patient and other factors such as increased employment were minor factors. It was apparent that the only savings that are generally considered are for one silo without factoring other increased or decreased costs and suffering.

When I left I had a sobering experience of how the system works and hopefully my future input into the health system will improve.

Thank you for sending me to this conference