

Complementary & Integrative Medicine Medical Interest Group

CIM-MIG

Spring 2025

Our Mission

Our mission is to support physicians, residents, and medical students who have an interest in complementary and integrative medicine (CIM) therapies. We will do this by sharing information, news and events, by providing recommendations for safe, responsible and professional practice, and by communicating with stakeholders about CIM as a valuable tool that can help Ontario's doctors deliver better healthcare.



Our Vision

Our vision is an inclusive health-care system in Ontario, in which patients can explore their interest in complementary and integrative medicine with doctors to ensure their safety and support their efforts to achieve better health outcomes.

In This Edition...

Message from the Chair

Upcoming Events

Clinical Resources

- Tick-Borne Infections in Ontario: What You Need to Know
- New Ontario ME/CFS, Fibromyalgia and POTS Clinical Tools for Primary Care Clinicians
- New Webinar Initiative

An Invitation to Members
Support Our Work
- Pay Your Voluntary
Constituency Fees

Message from the Chair



Hello CIM MIG members, we are happy to present our spring newsletter to you.

Dr. Elliot Jacobson has written a timely article about avoiding exposures to ticks as well as dealing with early Lyme Disease. Dr. Farah Tabassum and Kathleen Dennis have provided some very useful resources on ME/CFS, Fibromyalgia and POTS.

Please remember to fill out the recent surveys that were shared with you through email and OMA Connect. We are hoping that the information garnered will help us serve you better.

On behalf of the executive committee, I would like to wish you a healthy and joyful spring and summer

Dr. Esther Konigsberg MD CCFP

Conferences & Events

[ISOM 2025 CONFERENCE: Polypharmacy Reduction - The Role of Nutrients](#)

October 3-4 Toronto, Canada and online.

This conference is for medical professionals seeking practical, evidence-based strategies to manage polypharmacy and improve patient outcomes. Leading clinicians and researchers will present information on deprescribing and the supportive role of nutrient therapies.

Use promo code 'EarlyPRC' to receive 10% discount before June 30

[Event Registration](#)

Clinical Resources



Tick-Borne Infections in Ontario: What You Need to Know

As warmer weather draws people outdoors, it's crucial to be aware of the increasing prevalence of tick-borne infections in Ontario, particularly Lyme disease. These illnesses are transmitted through bites from blacklegged ticks, which are now found in almost all parts of the province, including urban areas like Toronto.

The Rise of Tick-Borne Infections in Ontario

Ontario has seen a significant increase in tick populations over the past decade. The black-legged tick, the primary vector for Lyme disease, has expanded its range across the province. According to Public Health Ontario, all of Toronto is considered an Estimated Risk Area for Lyme disease, with ticks identified in various neighborhoods.

Risk of Lyme disease is rising as ticks become more widespread and warmer winters result in more permanent tick populations. In 2021, Ontario reported 1,478 cases of Lyme disease, the highest in the country. Other tick-borne diseases, such as anaplasmosis and babesiosis, are also on the rise.

Preventing Lyme Disease: What You Can Do

The best way to protect yourself and your family is to prevent tick bites. Here are some effective strategies:

Dress Appropriately: Wear light-colored, long-sleeved shirts and long pants tucked into socks. This makes ticks easier to spot and prevents them from reaching your skin.

Use Insect Repellent: Apply insect repellents containing DEET or Icaridin to exposed skin and clothing. Always follow the product's instructions.

Stay on Trails: When hiking or walking in wooded or grassy areas, stay in the center of cleared paths to minimize contact with vegetation where ticks reside.

Perform Tick Checks: After spending time outdoors, thoroughly check yourself, your children, and pets for ticks. Pay close attention to areas like the scalp, behind knees, and underarms.

Shower Promptly: Shower or bathe within two hours of being outdoors to wash away any unattached ticks.

Dry Clothes: Immediately after coming in from outdoors, place clothes in a dryer on high heat for at least 10 minutes to kill any ticks that may be present.

What to Do If Bitten

If you find a tick attached to your skin, it's important to remove it promptly and correctly:

Use Fine-Tipped Tweezers: Grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible and pull upward with steady, even pressure. There are also commercially available tick removers that should be a part of any camping/hiking kit and household

Clean the Bite Area: Wash the area thoroughly with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. **Save the Tick:** Place the tick in a sealed container or plastic bag. Consider sending the tick to [geneticks.ca](https://www.geneticks.ca) for rapid tick analysis (they offer testing for all tick-borne pathogens within 2-5 days, or even quicker). Having information on whether the tick is carrying pathogens can help with decision-making around antibiotic prophylaxis.

Consider antibiotic prophylaxis: There is some controversy about the best course of action when considering antibiotics for tick bites. CDC guidelines recommend a single 200mg dose of doxycycline for adults or 4.4mg/kg for children ([LINK](#)). ILADS (The International Lyme and Associated Disease society) guidelines recommend a 3-week course of doxycycline or similar antibiotic for high-risk bites ([LINK](#)). Decisions for prophylaxis should be made from a patient-centred perspective.

Clinical Resources Continued...



Monitor for symptoms of Lyme disease which can appear 3 to 30 days after a tick bite. Early signs include fever, chills, headache, fatigue, muscle and joint aches, and swollen lymph nodes. A characteristic rash, often resembling a bull's-eye, may also develop, although up to 50% of Lyme patients report atypical rashes or no rash at all.

Protecting Your Home and Yard

Ticks can also inhabit your yard. To reduce tick exposure at home:

Maintain Your Lawn: Keep grass mowed and remove leaf litter and brush.

Yard Sprays made with essential oils from Cedarwood oil can be effective acaricides, but require more frequent application than chemical insecticides.

Create Barriers: Use wood chips or gravel to create a barrier between wooded areas and play zones.

Manage Rodents: Seal up cracks and openings in your home to prevent rodent entry, as they can carry ticks.

Protect Pets: Use veterinarian-approved tick prevention products for pets and check them regularly for ticks.

By Dr. Elliot Jacobson

Clinical Resources Continued...



New Ontario ME/CFS, FM and POTS Clinical Tools for Primary Care Clinicians

Ontario health care providers now have access to a new set of high-quality, evidence-based tools for diagnosing and managing Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/ Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS), Fibromyalgia (FM), and Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS). These tools were developed by the Centre for Effective Practice (CEP) as part of the Knowledge Translation in Primary Care Initiative, funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health.

What sets these tools apart is their foundation: they were built in partnership with both people with lived experience and frontline clinicians who specialize in these often-overlooked conditions. In addition, ME, FM, and POTS specialists from across Canada and the U.S. were involved to ensure accuracy, clinical relevance, and real-world applicability.

For members of the Complementary and Integrative Medicine (CIM) community, this is an important development. These tools recognize and support an individualized approach to care, acknowledging the complex, overlapping comorbidities and functional limitations that patients often face. These are the very conditions integrative medicine physicians regularly see in their clinical practice—patients whose needs are not being addressed within conventional care and require a nuanced, whole-person strategy for diagnosis and treatment.

Tools Designed for Complexity and Person-Centered Care

Each tool offers practical, concise guidance across several critical areas:

- Diagnosis and clinical presentation - Including red flags and typical symptom profiles.
- Management strategies - Featuring both pharmacological and non-pharmacological options, with special attention to patient-specific adaptation.
- Comorbidities - Recommendations for addressing conditions like orthostatic intolerance, IBS, mood symptoms, and migraines.

For integrative medicine physicians, who already approach chronic illness with a systems biology lens of root-cause analysis, symptom mapping, and functional optimization, these tools offer validation and support. They promote a careful, individualized process of assessment and management.

As with many chronic, multi-system illnesses, early identification and appropriate management can significantly improve quality of life. These tools help close the gap between lived experience and clinical recognition - something the integrative medicine community has long championed.

Why This Matters for CIM Practitioners

CIM physicians are often sought out by patients who have struggled for years without answers. These are patients who experience life altering fatigue, pain, dizziness, cognitive dysfunction, and multisystem distress—but frequently have difficulty finding care within the conventional model

This is particularly relevant for:

- Functional medicine providers, who routinely assess for mitochondrial dysfunction, immune dysregulation, or HPA axis disturbance.
- Manual therapists and movement specialists, who work with patients with proprioceptive dysfunction and chronic pain.
- Nutrition-focused physicians, who encounter gastrointestinal and metabolic co-morbidities.

The new tools help ground these approaches within a recognized clinical framework enabling clearer communication with colleagues and support for

Clinical Resources Continued...



diagnostic coding, referrals, and insurance coverage

Access the Tools

The tools are available to clinicians through the CEP's website. The landing page includes direct links to each of the three clinical tools, as well as additional resources, not only in the form of clinician resources but also in the form of patient and caregiver resources that CIM practitioners could let their patients know about.

<https://cep.health/clinical-products/fm-mecfs-pots-and-mcs/>

For CIM physicians committed to evidence-based innovation, collaborative care, and empowering patients, these tools are another helpful resource that can be integrated into practice.

We encourage all members to explore the tools, use them in practice, and share feedback to continue to improve care for patients with these complex chronic conditions.

Authors:

Dr. Farah Tabassum is a consultant physician on staff at Women's College Hospital's Environmental Health Clinic (EHC) and is a part time Clinical Lecturer with the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Toronto. She provided clinical leadership for the development of Ontario's Center for Effective Practice tools for primary care on ME, FM and POTS which launched in the spring of 2024. Prior to joining the EHC, she completed the PGY-3 Enhanced Skills Program in Clinical Environmental Health through the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Toronto and obtained certification in Functional Medicine through the Institute of Functional Medicine.

In addition to her work at the EHC, she serves as a consultant physician with Ontario's eConsult physicians group, on the topics of Post COVID Condition fatigue and for the Environmental Health group. She is a member of the Interdisciplinary Canadian Collaborative Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ICanCME) research network, presently serving on their Executive Committee.

Kathleen Dennis is a former registered nurse with over 35 years of experience in medical humanitarian aid, healthcare delivery, and research. She brings lived experience with post-infectious Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME/CFS), fibromyalgia, and orthostatic intolerance following a severe West Nile Virus infection, offering a unique perspective that bridges clinical care and patient experience. She served as a topic expert for the development of the Center for Effective Practice's ME/CFS, Fibromyalgia, and Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS) clinical tools for primary care clin

An invitation to members

New Webinar Initiative

The CIM MIG executive would like to launch a bi-monthly webinar series on “Topics in Integrative Medicine” in September. We would love to enlist our members who may have special interest areas and would like to share their clinical expertise with the CIM MIG membership. We will be offering a modest honorarium for our volunteer speakers. This will not only be an opportunity for us to learn from each other but also an opportunity to build community.

We will be sending out a survey to ask you about which topics you would like to present or be presented. We will also try to come up with a mutually agreeable time. Please keep a look out for the survey which we will share via email and OMA Connect.

Please Support Our Work - Pay Your Constituency Fees

Your CIM MIG Executive is focused on advocating for physicians who practice Complementary and Integrative Medicine. We are intent on gaining recognition for our field in Ontario and Canada. We need your support to help us continue our work and to help us create a safe regulatory environment for Ontario’s doctors. We have made significant progress towards this goal by engaging stakeholders, providing a consistent message about our members’ aspirations and concerns, and drafting submissions that offer real solutions.

By paying your \$50 Voluntary Constituency Fee, you will help ensure that our work can continue. We are working to support you, but we cannot do it unless you support us. Follow the instructions below to pay your voluntary dues:

Step 1: Log into the OMA

Step 2: Click on “[My Account](#)”

Step 3: Click on “Pay dues & fees”

Step 4: Click “Next Step” at the bottom of the page

Step 5: Click on “Complementary & Integrative Medicine Medical Interest Group”

Step 6: Click on “Next Step” at the bottom of the page

Step 7: Follow instructions on the page to finish the payment

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