



Top row: (L. to r.) Mohammed Alabdoulsalam, Dalhousie University; Sofia Papadakos, Laval University; Rachel Brunswick, Western University; Shubleen Sidhu, University of Manitoba; Juan Buitrago, University of Saskatchewan; Michelle Cwintal, McGill University

Bottom row: (L. to r.) Dr. Benoit Soucy, CDA Chief Knowledge Officer; Dr. Lisa Bentley, Canadian Trustee, Pierre Fauchard Academy; Alison Looper, University of Montreal; Rose (Ru Jing) Zhou, University of British Columbia; Sharmin Kadkhodayan, University of Alberta; Rima Azaizah, CDA Advocacy and Governance Associate.

## Canadian Dental Students Showcased at CDA/Dentsply Sirona Student Clinician Research Program

CDA and Dentsply Sirona organize an annual national student clinician research program, inviting student representatives from all Canadian dental schools to present results of their research.

For the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic, the CDA/Dentsply Sirona Student Clinician Research Program event was held as an in-person event, taking place June 17 during the Alberta Wellness Submit in Calgary, Alberta.

This national student research competition, which has been running since 1971, invites undergraduate dental students, selected by their respective faculty deans, to present and discuss their research with a panel of qualified judges and other conference attendees.

The first place winner of this year's event was Sofia Papadakos of Laval University and Mohammed Alabdoulsalam of Dalhousie University was runner-up.

The panel of judges for the competition were Dr. Benoit Soucy, CDA Chief Knowledge Officer, Dr. Mitch Taillon, CDA Past-President, and Col Jean-Pierre Picard, Deputy Director General Health Services—Clinical Services and Chief Dental Office/Director Dental Services, Canadian Forces Health Services.

“Judging the CDA/Dentsply Sirona program participants’ presentations is always a pleasure, because the research is always of the highest quality,” says Dr. Soucy. “This year was exceptional because all of the student researchers could have been eligible to win. The topics were relevant, the content was solid and the presentations were all high quality. The difference between the candidates was small but real, and both Sofia and Mohammed fully deserved their rankings,” he says.

### 1<sup>st</sup> prize: Sofia Papadakos, Laval University

**Sofia Papadakos** (DDS 2024) earned the top prize for her research on Rapamycin, a new drug for the treatment of oral cancer. Papadakos is a third-year dental student at Laval University and since her first year has been conducting research on alternative treatments for oral cancer under the supervision of Dr. Abdelhabib Semlali.

“I would like to thank Dr. Semlali, who has always supported me and has attended every conference where I’ve presented our research,” she says. “Sharing our results and the new advancements from these projects is truly gratifying. I would also like to thank my faculty for nominating me to represent Laval University,” says Papadakos.



(L. to r.): Dr. Soucy; Sofia Papadakos; Dr. Pretti Kartic, Senior Manager, Professional Affairs and Clinical Education, Dentsply Sirona Canada; Dr. Mitch Taillon, CDA Past-President.



“I was privileged to attend the event and learn about the interesting projects my fellow nominees have been working on,” says Papadakos. “There is incredible research being done across Canada, allowing us to progress in our field and provide the best care for our patients,” she says.

Papadakos is in the midst of a 3-month internship in France and came back to Calgary specially to attend the event. “It was all very well planned, with social events that gave us the chance to network with dentists as well as having some time to attend the interesting talks and presentations that were on offer at the Alberta Wellness Summit,” she says.

“When my name was announced as the winner, I felt so honoured and proud for myself, for Dr. Semlali and for Laval University.”



## 2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Mohammed Alabdoulsalam, Dalhousie University

**Mohammed Alabdoulsalam** (DDS 2024) received second prize for his research on the outcomes of condylar fractures using transparotid or submandibular approaches. Alabdoulsalam completed his undergraduate degree in chemistry and went on to dental school at Dalhousie where he was drawn to the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery field. He hopes to pursue a career in that discipline.

“The event was a great experience,” says Alabdoulsalam. “The group of students were really nice, and it felt like we knew each other well before the conference. It was a great to be included as part of a larger dental conference,” he says.

“Receiving an award was an honour, as there was a very strong group of fellow presenters at the event. I’d like to thank my supervisor, Dr. James Brady for his support, guidance, and advice along the way,” says Alabdoulsalam. “I’d also like to thank Dr. Leigha Rock and Dr. Violet D’Souza for their assistance throughout the research study. Finally, I would like to thank the Canadian Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (CAOMS) as this study would not be possible without its funding and support.”



Dr. Lisa Bentley, Canadian Trustee, Pierre Fauchard Academy (PFA), presenting Mohammed Alabdoulsalam with his \$1,000 scholarship on behalf of the PFA.



The winning student researchers were announced during an award ceremony sponsored and hosted by Dentsply Sirona, who generously provide the 1st and 2nd place prize winnings of \$2,000 and \$1,000 respectively.

Since its inception, CDA and Dentsply Sirona have worked together to help motivate and recognize bright young minds to investigate new approaches to a wide array of oral health concerns. The program’s aim is to “stimulate ideas, to improve communication and most of all, to increase student involvement in the advancement of the dental profession.”

During the Pierre Fauchard Academy (PFA) luncheon, Dr. Lisa Bentley, Canadian Trustee, PFA, presented a \$1,000 scholarship to each participating student of the research program. The Pierre Fauchard Academy, through its Oral Health Foundation, have been generously supporting the student research program for many years and are an instrumental part of the success of this event. ♦