The Canadian Association for Dental Research (The Canadian Division of the IADR): The Formative Years.

Prior to 1976, Canadian members of the International Association for Dental Research (IADR) had played active roles in dental research and affairs of IADR as members of the North American Division of the IADR; some had even served as President of the Division or the IADR itself. Mainly for political reasons such as the need to function as an autonomous entity to speak specifically for American dental research, influence American policy makers, funding agencies, etc, American members decided on the need to establish an American Division. This meant the dissolution of the North American Division. Therefore, officers of the Ontario section of the IADR North American Division took the initiative to canvass Canadian members of the IADR on the need for a separate Canadian Division of the IADR. The Canadian members indeed voted to form a Canadian Division, and the Canadian Division of the IADR was activated on June 10, 1976. At that time, a charter executive of the Division was elected, and announced at the biennial meeting of the Association of Canadian Faculties of Dentistry/Association des Faculté Dentaires du Canada (ACFD/AFDC), The officers were A. Murray Hunt as President, Barry J. Sessle as Vice-President, and H. James Sandham as Secretary. Also in June 1976, the Division’s Constitution and Bylaws document was drafted, using as a guide that of the recently established American Division of the IADR but with attention paid to ensuring that it reflected matters specifically pertaining to Canada and Canadian members and that it was in accord with the Constitution and Bylaws of the IADR.

The latter half of the 1976 also was a particularly busy time for the charter executive, assisted by guidance provided by Dr. A.R. Frechette, then Secretary-Treasurer of the IADR on matters such as incorporation, collection of membership dues and subscription to the Journal of Dental Research. In addition, standing committees of the Division were formulated with particular attention paid to geographic, basic science and clinical science representation. These Committees were

(a) The Membership Committee:

J.P. Lund (Université de Montreal), J.H.P. Main (University of Toronto), and
G.H. Sperber (University of Alberta);
(b) The Nominating Committee:
A.G. Hannam (University of British Columbia), R.E. Jordan (University of Western Ontario), and M. Weinstock (McGill University);

(c) The Finance Committee, a subcommittee of the provisional Board of Directors and including A.M. Hunt (University of Toronto) and H.J. Sandham (University of Toronto); and

(d) The National Affairs Committee:
C.L.B. Lavelle (University of Manitoba), C.S.C. Lear (University of British Columbia), B. Lilienthal (Dalhousie University), K.J. Paynter (Medical Research Council of Canada, Ottawa), and B.J. Sessle (University of Toronto).

Also a postal ballot for the election of the first slate of Officers to be elected in accordance with the provisional Constitution and Bylaws of the Canadian Division, and notice of the first annual business meeting of the Division, were circulated to members in late 1976.

The Division’s first annual business meeting took place under the chairmanship of the Division’s charter President, A.M. Hunt, on March 30, 1977 during the IADR’s General Session held in Copenhagen, Denmark. Of particular note is that members present voted in favour of seeking incorporation of the Division and also ratified the Constitution and Bylaws of the Division that would also be known as the Canadian Association for Dental Research (CADR), with the stated Objectives “to promote the advancement of research in all science pertaining to the oral cavity, its adjacent structures, and their relation to the body as a whole; to promote the utilization of this knowledge for better approaches to prevention and treatment of oral disease and the improvement of dental health care systems, and to facilitate communication and cooperation among all investigators in order to share and utilize this knowledge for the benefit of all people.” In addition, there was discussion at the meeting of establishing a close working relationship with the ACFD/AFDC which already had a focus on dental research in Canadian academic institutions and held biennial meetings at which research-based presentations (as well as presentations with an educational theme) were made. Such an affiliation was seen as a positive move firstly to avoid duplication of activities and competition for limited sources of funding for
dental research and related meetings, and secondly to provide Canadian dental researchers with an organizational structure to speak through a single unified “voice” in support of dental research in Canada. Related to this viewpoint was the desire expressed during the business meeting to ensure that there was broad geographical and discipline representation in the CADR’s committees and Board of Directors and its activities and decision-making processes.

Another order of business at the meeting was the installation of the first duly elected Officers of the CADR who had been elected through the postal ballot in the months prior to the meeting in Copenhagen. These Officers were President B.J. Sessle (University of Toronto), President-Elect C. Dawes (University of Manitoba), Vice-President D.J. Carmichael (University of Alberta), and Secretary-Treasurer H.J. Sandham (University of Toronto).

Over the next 2 years that followed the first annual business meeting in Copenhagen, the CADR was engaged in several activities. These included the selection of its first group of undergraduate students (4) from Canadian dental schools to attend the next IADR meeting in Washington DC, supported by the recently established IADR/FDI Travel Grant programme. Officers also proceeded with the process of incorporation of the CADR (through its legal counsel, Mr. J.J. Doane of Robertson, Lane & Perrett in Toronto). The application for incorporation in 1978 included 5 named “applicants” who were also named as the first Directors of the CADR; these individuals were B.J. Sessle, A.M. Hunt, C. Dawes, D.J. Carmichael and H.J. Sandham. The CADR Officers also liaised with ACFD/AFDC representatives to establish a close working relationship between both organizations. This included the agreement that, beginning in 1980, CADR would co-sponsor with ACFD/AFDC the latter’s biennial conferences. CADR would also have representation on the ACFD/AFDC Research Committee, and eventually this Committee comprised CADR officers.

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