



Dr. Paivi Miettunen

Dr. Paivi Miettunen is an Associate Professor and Pediatric Rheumatologist in the Division of Pediatric Rheumatology at the Alberta Children's Hospital and the Cumming School of Medicine, University of Calgary. She is Clinical Investigator at the McCaig Institute and University of Calgary.

Dr. Miettunen's research focuses on two areas: 1) the rare inflammatory diseases, including macrophage activation syndrome and chronic recurrent multifocal osteomyelitis, and 2) exploring the impact of expressive arts in pediatric patients with pain and chronic disease. Building on her expertise in visual arts and medicine, Dr. Miettunen developed an Integrated Clinical Art Therapy model "Celebrate Ability" for pediatric rheumatology patients, this program integrates art and digital storytelling to use the children's own creativity to express how arthritis affects them, with the goal of focusing on the children's ability, not disability. Harnessing the use of modern technologies, her research team helps children create their own personal narrative of their experience with the disease, utilizing photos, videos, voice clips and their own writing.

Dr. Miettunen's research team is trying to find if this opportunity to express themselves will make the children feel better. As a health care team, they hope to become more understanding of the challenges in the "everyday life" of a child with arthritis. They continue to share the children's artwork and digital stories at public events and venues to increase public knowledge about childhood arthritis. The goal of her research team is to evaluate the impact of the program on children's quality of life, on the healthcare team, and on public awareness. This program is the first of its kind, and could influence how arthritis is managed in children, in Canada and beyond. It will help to draw much-needed attention to the existence and impact of childhood arthritis in our community, information which will enable earlier diagnosis and better management of this disease for the children affected.