



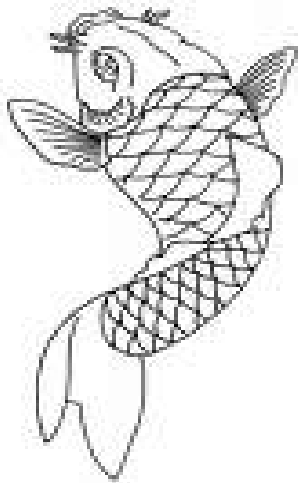
The Parkinsonian

Fall Issue, 2006



NW PADRECC

Parkinson's Disease Research, Education & Clinical Center



Did You Take Your Fish Oil Today?

Nearly half of all patients diagnosed with Parkinson's disease (PD) are affected by depression. Current research suggests that the depression which many PD patients experience is a biological factor of the disease instead of a

psychological reaction to the diagnosis. Approximately 26% of Parkinson's patients with depression are on an antidepressant treatment; however, many of the drugs used to treat depression come with a long list of side effects and are not always effective. Dr. Lynne Shinto of Oregon Health Science University (OHSU) is looking for a more natural method of treating PD depression.

Dr. Shinto is currently researching the effects fish oil on multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's patients with depression when it is used in combination with other anti-depressant medications. She is currently conducting a pilot study in which she plans to enroll 60 patients with either Parkinson's or multiple sclerosis. These patients are randomly assigned to two groups. One group is given fish oil capsules and the other is given placebo capsules. Patients will then be monitored over five study visits to see whether or not their mood improves. If the results suggest that there may be some correlation in fish oil and

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"See the Person Inside"

A poem/lyrics by April Curfman who was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease in 1988

If I were blind - I know you'd show me the way
If I were deaf - you'd find a way to communicate
But I stand here & shake - it's as if my body's in chains
The pills that I take - make it seem I'm ok.

My steps are slow - I often hesitate
Embarrassed by my shuffling - limping - uneven gate.
Don't walk on ahead - let your smiling eyes say
That I sill walk with grace (thanks won't show on my face)

I am like you - Please - look in my eyes
Don't just see the disease - see the person inside.
Parkinson's is part of me, but not why
I choose JOY, I choose HOPE, I choose LIFE.
Let your respect show - leave me dignity of soul
It means more than you know.

I cannot do the things that I used to do.
I struggle each day - trying so hard to fight off the blues
And the humiliation - if you only knew
What it's like being stuck - in this body of mine.

I'm the same person I was yesterday
Who walked tall and so proudly lead the way.
Parkinson's took, I had no choice, had no say.
Still, I choose to make noise, to deny fear a voice,
I choose to celebrate.
A cure would be bliss - time won't wait so I live
Each day as a gift.

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Did You Take Your Fish Oil Today?

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improvement in mood, then further studies will be conducted.

So, why fish oil? Fish oil has a fatty acid in it called omega-3. This fatty acid is found primarily in fish. Scientists were first tipped off about the effects fish oil may have on depression when they noticed that countries which had the highest rates of fish consumption had the lowest rates of depression. For example, the depression rate in New Zealand is 60% higher than the depression rate in Japan. Japan, on average, consumes 150 lbs of seafood per person, per year compared to New Zealand which consumes, on average, 40 lbs of seafood per person, per year. New Zealand has a lower rate of fish consumption but a much higher rate of depression. Studies have suggested that omega-3 fatty acid increases the level of serotonin in the brain. This is the same effect as anti-depressant drugs like Prozac. One study in particular, conducted on piglets, showed that the piglets which consumed a formula enriched with fish oil had double the amount of serotonin in their frontal cortex, which is responsible for regulation of depression and compulsivity. Few studies have been conducted on the effects of fish oil in Parkinson's disease patients. Hopefully Dr. Lynn Shinto's study will be the first of many.



Research Opportunity!

The PADRECC is offering a chance to participate in several different research studies related to PD. If you are a patient in the PADRECC movement disorders clinic with PD and are interested, please contact Susan O'Connor at (503) 721-1091 to see if you qualify.



Gene Therapy

By Jay Nutt, M.D.

Gene therapy for Parkinson's disease is now being tested in people with PD at various research centers. Gene therapy refers to inserting genes that will be taken up by nerve cells in the brain and then make proteins that could relieve symptoms of PD and perhaps reverse some of the damage to dopamine neurons. The genes are carried by a harmless virus and are injected into the particular parts of the basal ganglia that could benefit from more of the protein made by the gene.

Three trials are underway in PD. One trial is inserting the gene for neurturin, a growth factor that is similar to GDNF, for which there is evidence of a restorative function for dopamine neurons. A second study is putting in a gene that will help with the conversion of levodopa to dopamine in the basal ganglia. The third study is placing an enzyme in the subthalamic nucleus to reduce the excitability of the structure. All these studies are phase 1 studies which means that they are to assess the tolerability of the treatments, not whether they are beneficial. All three studies have not found any significant toxicity so that it is expected that clinical trials to examine the effects of the treatments on the symptoms of PD will be initiated soon.

For more information on gene therapy and other updated Parkinson's Disease topics, please visit

www.parkinson.org

Calendar of Events

Upcoming classes, support groups, and other events related to movement disorders

Seattle Patient Education Talks

Over the last year, 6 patient education lectures have been held in Portland, and have been well received by patients. In an effort to meet the needs of those outside the Portland area, Ali Samii, MD, and Romay Franks, RN, have planned a lecture series to be held in Seattle. With the assistance from specialists at the Seattle VA, they will conduct 5 talks aimed at helping patients better understand and manage PD. We hope to video these talks for those living outside the Seattle metro area. Contact Romay for more information (206) 277-4560.

All talks listed will be held at the Seattle VA (Building 1, Room 240) from 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM

Oct 17, 2006: Apathy & Anxiety in PD
Martha Peterson, ARNP

Dec 19, 2006: Dementia in PD: Ways to Improve Mind & Memory
Jim Leverenz, MD

Feb 20, 2007: Exercise, Balance, Freezing, and Mobility Tips
Valerie Kelly, PT, PhD

April 17, 2007: Sleep Disorders
Ted Bushnell, MD

June 19, 2007: Medications in PD
Ali Samii, MD

Annual WA State Parkinson's Symposium "Governor's Conference on Parkinson's"

This symposium, subtitled *Raising the Flag on Parkinson's*, is the Puget Sound region's only large-scale Parkinson's conference scheduled for this year.

Nov 18, 2006 at the Sea-Tac Hilton Conference Center

Registration from APDA & NWPf (503) 494-9054, or online at www.nwpf.org/sympinfo.asp.



Gordon Campbell's "Fatigue" Patient Education Talk

Portland Patient Education Talks

Secrets to Taking Control of Your Parkinson's Disease Health Team

October 27, 2006, Lisa Mann, RN
10:00-11:00 AM, Portland VA Auditorium

Name of talk and speakers are still to be announced for these dates.

Friday, December 8, 2006
Friday, January 19, 2007
Friday, March 16, 2007
Friday, May 18, 2007

Parkinson's Center of Oregon (PCO) 2006-2007 Annual Events:

Newly Diagnosed Educational Session
Occurs every other month

1st Annual PCO Dinner Series: Housing Transitions

Jan 11, 18, 25, 2007, 5:30-7:30 PM

Caregivers' Conference: Define & Create Your Support Network

Feb 22, 2007, 5:30-8:30 PM

Outreach Symposium: Champions & Challenges (Located in Bend, Oregon)
April, 2007 (Date still to be determined)

Event contact info: PADRECC: 503-721-1091
PCO: 503-494-9054

Sole Support for Parkinson's 2006

Sunday September 24, 2006 was the day which the Parkinson's Resources of Oregon (PRO) chose for their Sole Support for Parkinson's walk, and it was a perfect day. With the warm sun on their faces, 850 people showed up to walk either the 1k or 5k walk along the beautiful Willamette Greenway Trail. In all, the walkers raised \$84,644 for PRO. The money will go towards programs which help Parkinson's patients battle the many difficulties they face. PRO is already planning new programs and innovative approaches to help support these people throughout their daily lives. This year was considered a success, and they are hoping to do the walk for many years to come. So, if you missed it this year, don't fret. Just watch the newsletter events page for the Sole Support For Parkinson's walk next September, and hopefully it will be another great day to go for a walk.



Sole Support Parkinson's Walk 2006

For more information on the Parkinson's Resources of Oregon Please call 1-800-426-6806, or visit them on the web at www.parkinsonsresources.org

Want to Contribute?

This newsletter is yours, and we think you should be involved. If you have any art, poems, stories, or articles you would like to share with other Parkinson's patients, please send them to the address listed below or e-mail them to nwpadrecc@va.gov with newsletter submission as the subject line.

Portland VA Medical Center
Attention: Susan O'Connor
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3710 SW US Veterans Hospital Rd.
Portland, OR 97239

To receive the Parkinsonian by e-mail please forward a request to nwpadrecc@med.va.gov. Call 503-721-1091 to be removed from our mailing list



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