



You Are Not Alone

Next Meeting

**Thursday
May 26, 2011
1:30 p.m.:**

**Place: Eau Gallie Public Library
Community Room
1521 Pineapple Avenue
Melbourne, FL**

**Program:
Nurse Barbara Boreman
Hospice of Saint Francis
Caregiving**

2011 Program

June 23rd: Sharing/Discussion (Board members TBD)
July/ Aug: No meeting
Sept. 22nd: Dr. Michele Munnich, Nutrition & Celia Wilson, Exercise
Oct. 27th: SHINE, Lynn Meagher
Dec. 8th: Christmas Party/Bunco

Welcome to New Members

John Tierney
Jim and Audrey Garnett

**Thanks to Pat Chadwick Personal
Computing for printing the newsletter.**

Issue 5 for May, 2011.

To contribute contact Deb Ridel
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For an e-mail copy, contact Don Wilkof
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For the latest news visit us on the web at:
www.brevardparkinsonsg.org

Brevard Parkinson's Support Group

January Meeting Highlights

The last meeting was held April 28 with about 35 members in attendance. Thanks to Peg Holloway from Senior Bridge for providing refreshments at the April meeting.

Swallowing Home Program

At the April meeting Lara Layne speech therapist from Health First gave a presentation titled "sage swallowing home program." She discussed:

Frequently Asked Questions about Dysphasia

The Swallowing Process (Phases)

Ways to Improve Swallowing

Diet Consistency Guidelines

Ways to Sneak In Calories

She then demonstrated three exercises to improve swallowing.

New Agent Orange Presumptive Disabilities and DIC:

As you may know, the VA Secretary recently added Ischemic Heart Disease, **Parkinson's Disease**, and B-Cell or Hairy Cell Leukemia to the list of disabilities that will be considered as Service-Connected for Veterans exposed to Agent Orange, mostly in Vietnam. If your deceased spouse died from one of the above disabilities, you may well be eligible for DIC (Dependency Indemnity Compensation). The current basic rate for DIC is \$1,154 monthly, tax-free. If you believe you qualify, please call the VA for assistance.

AMERICAN PARKINSON'S DISEASE ASSOCIATION SYMPOSIUM

Boca Raton Fl. May 6, 2011
By Deb and Ron Ridel

The APDA South Chapter annual symposium was once again a very interesting and informative event. The day included three formal presentations and a question-answer session. First, Dr. Connie Keintz, PhD., a professor at Florida Atlantic University, discussed the voice assistance therapies of the Lee Silverman Voice Treatment (LSVT) method. She presented dramatic videos of the method's improvement not only in speech but also in facial expression. LSVT is an intense voice training system that includes 16 sessions in four weeks with much practice and homework. Some members of our (BPSG) group have taken the method and found it helpful. LSVT voice has expanded to LSVT BIG which uses similar methods to work on balance.

The second session was a lively presentation by Marilyn Tait, RN, who is the author of "The Happy Caregiver". She emphasized that no one asks for the job of caregiver but most accept it with love and energy. Caregivers must understand the need for respect and dignity of the patient but must also remember to take care of themselves first. Both should remember that while you have Parkinson's, Parkinson's does not have to have you.

The third session was presented by Dr. Theresa Zesiewicz, MD., who is a movement disorders specialist at USF. She said that Parkinson's is the most 'popular' neurological disorder but also the most treatable. She then spent time discussing the various treatments, the importance their timing, and the associated other symptoms. The day ended with a question and answer session for Drs. Zesiewicz and Hammond (the APDA medical director). Over 150 patients and caregivers were in attendance.

University of Florida Researchers Offer swallowing Solution

For many of the nearly one million Americans with Parkinson's disease, swallowing is anything but automatic. In fact, according to the Parkinson's Disease Foundation, their most common cause of death is pneumonia caused by inhaling foreign material, such as food, while trying to swallow. University of Florida researchers believe a hand-held device holds the solution to their swallowing problems. According to a UF study reported in the current issue of the journal "Neurology", about a third of the volunteers who used the device improved their ability to swallow.

The device itself is not new. Called an Expiratory Muscle Strength Training (or EMST) device, it has been used with success in patients with multiple sclerosis and in elderly, sedentary adults. "The muscles involved in swallowing progressively weaken in Parkinson's patients and become uncoordinated in the same way that patients lose coordination and strength in their arms and legs," said Michelle Troche, the study's lead investigator. Troche is a clinical lecturer and speech pathologist in the UF College of Public Health and Health Professions' department of speech, language and hearing sciences.

As she explains it, as the disease progresses, it becomes more and more difficult for Parkinson's patients to sense material they may have breathed into their airways. It also becomes much harder to cough and expel it. Co-investigator Christine Sapienza, professor and chair of the department of speech, language and hearing sciences, says the EMST uses the basic exercise theory behind any strength training program. The patient is asked to exhale into the EMST. A calibrated pressure release valve within the device won't open until the patient has generated enough lung pressure. The more pressure needed, the stronger the muscles have to be.

Sixty patients took part in the study using the devices at home for 20 minutes a day, five days a week, for four weeks. Half the group had a device that helped strengthen their muscles, while the other half had a device that appeared the same, but did not give their muscles the same workout. Sapienza developed the EMST device along with researchers Paul Davenport in the College of Veterinary Medicine and A. Daniel Martin in the department of physical therapy.