



You Are Not Alone

Issue 2010 -10 for October

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For the latest news, visit us on the web at:

www.brevardparkinsonsg.org

**Next Meeting
Thursday
October 28, 2010
1:30 p.m.**

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

Program:

Satellite Beach Fire Dept. Topic "Home
Safety and Fall Prevention Strategies."

The 2010 Program

Nov. No Meeting

Dec. Christmas Party and Discussion
Groups

Applications for Deep Brain Stimulation

Dr. Richard M. Unger, Jr., from the Neurology Institute of Melbourne and Barbara Williams from Medtronic Inc., Atlanta Georgia, gave a demonstration and presentation on new applications for Deep Brain Stimulation (dbs). DBS is a surgical procedure where electrodes are permanently implanted in the brain and then programmed to stimulate the brain. It has been used extensively in late stage Parkinson's disease to manage symptoms such as tremor and rigidity. Patients are awake during part of the surgery, responding to commands and questions of the surgeon as they target the appropriate area.

Dr. Unger demonstrated the device's effectiveness by turning down the settings on one of his patients. The result was dramatic. The patient had very severe tremors on one side without the stimulator set on. When properly set the stimulator virtually eliminated the tremor. The new features of the stimulator included the ability to have multiple programs and rechargeable batteries. The stimulator is being use for essential tremor as well as a wide range of Parkinson's variations.

DBS is usually performed at a Movement Disorder Center of Excellence such as Shands in Gainesville or Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville. Ongoing programming of the devices is handled by the patient's local neurologist who has been trained on its use. The unit is battery operated and the battery has a life of about 5 years.

Thanks to Cordula Correa for providing refreshments for the September meeting.

Welcome to new members:

Dorothy & Roy Valdes

Tony Spano Patricia Hunte

Liz Hemenway Robert Lizer

Margie Skipper

Martha Parrish

Elizabeth Kaya

Anthony Misco

Exercise That Can Reverse Parkinson's Symptoms

.Bigger is better... yes, it's a cliché, but for people with Parkinson's disease, it's a valuable one. In a recent study of Parkinson's patients, every participant improved by doing exercise that involved big movements. . Air Force Major Maria Alvarez, MD, and her colleagues at Wilford Hall Medical Center, Tx. built on that concept, applying it to movement and muscle power to encourage patients to "think big" about exercise, since their movements tend to diminish as the disease progresses

For the first eight weeks, participants engaged in "large range" movements, such as taking giant steps while swinging their arms vigorously. Then, once they had met the initial goal to improve range of motion and balance, they spent the last four weeks using the Nintendo Wii yoga and bowling systems, both of which involve arm swings and forceful movements. The program proved helpful in improving the typical ambulation of Parkinson's patients -- shuffling gait, arms hanging at their sides. After 12 weeks, participants showed an average improvement of 58% in muscular function and coordination and they walked more normally. These results suggest that the exercises not only are beneficial in relieving Parkinson's symptoms but may even slow or reverse progression of the disease, said Dr. Alvarez.

Dr. Alvarez attributes the program's success to several factors. First, earlier studies had already demonstrated that exercise produces brain chemicals that protect against the disease's signature destruction of dopamine cells. This particular form of large-movement exercise is fun, so participants enjoyed being involved and were happy to participate -- they even organized their own Nintendo Wii bowling tournament! Also, Dr. Alvarez told me that she believes that focusing on one goal -- "big" -- is achievable for people with neurological disorders, who often have trouble practicing and repeating complex tasks. Dr. Alvarez believes that the "think BIG" approach would benefit patients with other neurodegenerative conditions, such as multiple sclerosis, brain injury and stroke.

Exercise continued

The first step to try this should always be to seek an evaluation by a physical therapist to advise you on what large-movement exercises you can safely do at home. For instance, the Nintendo Wii system uses an elevated platform that can pose a falling risk. Where most healthy adults are urged to engage in at least 2.5 hours of exercise each week, Dr. Alvarez suggests that people with Parkinson's should do more -- aiming for 30 minutes of exercise at least six days a week. If that seems overwhelming, you can try breaking it into increments of five or 10 minutes over the day.

Get The Newsletter Faster

In order to keep our postage costs down, we are encouraging people to start receiving the monthly Parkinson's Support Group newsletter via e-mail rather than U.S. mail. If you do not like to read it on your computer screen, it can be printed out for your convenience. Also, some people are on both the e-mail list and the U.S. mail list.

If you would like to change the delivery method for the newsletter, please send an e-mail to don991@cfl.rr.com

In this e-mail state whether you would like to switch to e-mail; quit receiving the newsletter by U.S. mail (use e-mail only); and the e-mail address you would like to have the newsletter sent to.

Seniorfest 2010

Thanks to all the members who volunteered to serve at the Parkinson's Support Group of Brevard's table at Seniorfest 2010! Once again we made some good professional connections, educated the public and find new mbers

Thank You ACMS INC Advanced Computing and Mailing, Inc for generously underwriting the cost of printing our Newsletter