

MARCH 2012

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## 2012 Annual Educational Symposium



### MOVING FORWARD: *living with Parkinson's*

Saturday, April 28, 2012  
9:00 am—3:15 pm

United Way  
50 Waugh Drive  
Houston, TX 77007

**Registration opens April 1<sup>st</sup>**

Please join us Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup> in recognition of Parkinson's Awareness Month for the 2012 HAPS Annual Educational Symposium. This year's program will include recent updates on advances in science and Parkinson's research, approaches to working with your physician to improve treatment outcomes, understanding your clinical exam, the role of exercise in the management of PD, innovative coping strategies and much more. The Keynote Speaker will be Pamela Quinn—former professional dancer, current instructor of PD Movement Lab sponsored by Brooklyn Parkinson Group, soccer mom and person with Parkinson's. Pamela was featured in a profile on CBS Evening News with Katie Couric and has a wealth of helpful tips for "living" with Parkinson's. We hope you see you in April.

### Dopamine May Make Parkinson's Disease Patients More Creative

Some Parkinson's Disease patients can suddenly become creative when they take dopamine therapy, producing pictures, sculptures, novels and poetry. But their new-found interests can become so overwhelming that they ignore other aspects of their everyday life, such as daily chores and social activities, according to research published in the March issue of the *European Journal of Neurology*.

Italian researchers studied 36 patients with Parkinson's Disease - 18 with increased artistic production and 18 without - and compared them with 36 healthy controls without Parkinson's. None of the patients had engaged in artistic hobbies before they took dopamine. "Patients were included in the artistic group if they started working on creative projects for two

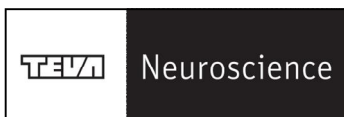
Continued on page 3

**In order to bring you more information, this month's exercise and support group schedule can be found on the enclosed insert.**

This publication is not intended to provide diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or pharmacist with questions regarding medical conditions or drug interactions.

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# 2nd Annual Playing for Parkinson's



**Sunday, March 25, 2012**

holland k. smith  
john mcvey & the stumble • tony vega  
paul ramirez • mojofromopolis • the humbuckers

Please join us for the 2nd annual Playing for Parkinson's fundraising event.

Bring your dancing shoes and get ready for some great Texas blues, rock n' roll music and delicious homemade Texas BBQ. There will be a silent auction, raffle and more.

The event, originated and organized by Doug Benzuly, was created to raise awareness of Parkinson's disease and to benefit HAPS and the individuals it serves.

## GOOD MUSIC FOR A GOOD CAUSE

**THE BIG EASY**  
5731 Kirby Drive

Music from 2-7 pm  
\$20 Donation at the door

Benefiting

**HOUSTON AREA  
PARKINSON SOCIETY**

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FOR PARKINSON'S RESEARCH**

## Newly Diagnosed Education Program

**Saturday, March 24, 2012**  
8:30 am—12:30 pm

**Speaker: Dr. Joohi Jimenez-Shahed**, Movement Disorder Specialist, Baylor College of Medicine, Parkinson's Disease Center & Movement Disorders Clinic

This program is designed as a "Parkinson's 101" course for individuals who have been diagnosed within the past three years, their family members or friends who want to learn more about the disease, treatment options and coping strategies.

**Seating is limited and registration is required. Call 713-626-7114 to RSVP.**

## DBS Discussion Group

**Wednesday, March 28, 2012**  
6:00—8:00 pm

American Red Cross ▪ 2700 SW Freeway ▪ Houston, TX ▪ 77098

**Speakers: Dr. Richard Simpson**, Neurosurgeon, Methodist Neurological Institute

**Dr. William Ondo**, Movement Disorder Specialist, University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

This program is designed for those with Parkinson's who have completed Deep Brain Stimulation Surgery, are thinking about having DBS or just want to learn more about DBS as a treatment option. Learn more about the surgical procedure; how DBS works; who makes a good candidate; which Parkinson's symptoms benefit most and for how long; what to expect before and after surgery; and what defines DBS success. Participants will also have the opportunity to talk to others who have either completed or considering DBS. Presented in partnership with Medtronic.

**For more information or to register, please call 713-626-7114.**

Creative continued from page 1

or more hours a day after starting taking dopamine" explains lead author Dr Margherita Canesi, a neurological specialist at the Centro Parkinson e Disordini del Movimento in Milan.

"Our findings suggest that the patients' newly acquired artistic skills were probably there all along, but did not start to emerge until they took the dopamine therapy. They did not appear to be connected with abnormal repetitive behaviours, such as impulse control disorders or punding - stereotyped behavior characterised by an intense fascination with a complex, excessive, non-goal oriented, repetitive activity.

"Other researchers have noted that altered creative drive has been observed in patients who have neurodegenerative diseases or have had a stroke. However the anatomical and physiological understanding of creativity is difficult to establish and quantify."

Dopamine is a neurotransmitter that helps control the brain's reward and pleasure centres. It helps to regulate movement and emotional responses and enables people to see rewards and work towards them. Parkinson's Disease is caused by dopamine deficiency and using medication to increase dopamine levels in the brain is one of the most popular kinds of therapy.

Key findings of the study included:

- The artwork presented by the patients was mainly drawings/paintings (83%), poetry/novels (50%) and sculpture (28%). In 78% of cases, the patients showed more than one skill, normally writing plus painting or drawing.
- Some of the patients produced art that was sold and books that were published, but, at the other end of the scale, some of the creative work was of a very poor quality.
- By using the Torrence Test of Creative Thinking to compare the three groups, the researchers showed that the artistic Parkinson's Disease patients had similar overall and individual scores to the healthy controls. However the non-artistic patients had significantly lower overall scores than the healthy controls and significantly lower scores than the artistic patients when it came to the elaboration sub-score.
- There was no correlation between the Torrence Test of Creative Thinking scores and the scores obtained using the Barratt Impulsivity Scale, one of the oldest and most widely used measures of impulsive personality traits.
- The researchers also used the Minnesota Impulsive Disorders Interview. This showed that one creative patient was positive for compulsive sexual behaviour, one creative patient for compulsive buying and two creative and three non-creative patients for pathological gambling. However, there was little difference in the Torrence scores for patients who tested positive or negative on the Minnesota scale.
- None of the patients or healthy controls displayed the stereotyped behaviour measured by the Punding Rating Scale.

"In conclusion, we found that newly acquired creative drive in patients with Parkinson's Disease, after the introduction of dopaminergic therapy, is not related to impulsivity or impulse control disorders as measured by the Barratt Impulsivity Scale or the Minnesota Impulsive Disorders Interview" says Dr Canesi.

"We believe that their desire to be creative could represent emerging innate skills, possibly linked to repetitive and reward-seeking behaviours. Further studies are needed to support our preliminary observations."

*Wiley-Blackwell. (2012, February 26). "Dopamine May Make Parkinson's Disease Patients More Creative." Medical News Today. Retrieved from <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/releases/242120.php>.*

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## Also in the news...

Fox Trial Finder announced in late February that A US advisory panel made a recommendation to the FDA to approve Northera (chemically known as droxidopa) as a potential new drug for neurogenic orthostatic hypotension in multiple disorders, including Parkinson's. This recommendation is part of the very last hurdle a new therapy must conquer before it reaches pharmacy shelves. The panel recommendation is non-binding and a final decision from the FDA is expected March 28th.

Additionally, this drug is being tested in a clinical trial posted on Fox Trial Finder to assess whether it may also minimize falls in Parkinson's disease. To learn more about this study go to <https://foxtrialfinder.michaeljfox.org/trial/650/>

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## MARATHON MANIA!

As we wrap up the Marathon season, we have so many to thank for all their determination and dedication to running, walking, fundraising and supporting HAPS in the 2012 Chevron Houston Marathon. Together we raised \$62,316 that will help fund vital services that HAPS provides to the Parkinson's community in and around Houston. We could not have done it without the help of our Sidewalk Squad Sponsor, Wartsila; our 63 runners, walkers and fundraisers; and the over 600 individuals who contributed to the cause. Thank you for making this another successful year!



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## Diet Affects Likelihood of Developing Parkinson's Disease

New research suggests that the way people eat may impact whether they develop Parkinson's disease (PD). Two studies, one carried out at a PDF Research Center at Columbia University in New York and published in the journal *Movement Disorders* and another carried out at hospitals in Japan and published in the *European Journal of Neurology*, found that adherence to a particular type of diet was associated with reduced odds of having Parkinson's.

Previous research suggested that diet might play a role in the development of Parkinson's. In particular, a single large study found that people who consumed a diet high in vegetables, whole grains, fruits, and legumes along with moderately high levels of fish but low to moderate levels of dairy, meat, and poultry — the so-called "Mediterranean-style diet" — had a lower chance of developing Parkinson's.

In these two studies, researchers from a large Japanese consortium of neurologists called the Fukuoka Kinki Parkinson's Disease Study Group in Japan and a PDF-supported group at Columbia University led by Roy Alcalay, M.D., M.Sc., both followed up on those previous findings. They recruited groups of people with and without Parkinson's, and used surveys to collect data on what people in each group ate. They then looked to see whether there was a significant association between the types of diets people consumed and whether they had Parkinson's.

### Results

- Eating a Mediterranean-style diet was associated with significantly reduced odds of developing Parkinson's.
- Those who followed a diet other than Mediterranean-style did not have an increased the risk of developing Parkinson's.
- The New York study found that, among people with Parkinson's, those who did not follow the Mediterranean-style diet developed the disease earlier in life than those who did follow the diet.
- In the Japanese study, a healthy diet that was characterized by a high intake of vegetables, seaweed, pulses, mushrooms, fruits and fish, was inversely associated with the risk of Parkinson's with a border-line significance.

### What Does it Mean?

These studies add to the growing body of research that has found a relationship between diet and neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease. It is important to note that this work does not show that eating a diet different than a Mediterranean-style diet will significantly increase the risk of Parkinson's. Rather; it suggests that a Mediterranean-style diet is protective against the development of Parkinson's.

Previous nutritional studies have reported inconsistent findings about the relationship to diet and Parkinson's. The authors of both these studies suggest that these inconsistencies may be the result of focusing on single food items or nutrients such as just fish or vitamin E. Such studies do not take into account how nutrients interact or diet as a whole. Instead, these authors focused on the total diet in relationship to Parkinson's.

There are important limitations to these studies. Both studies were retrospective. They asked people with PD and controls to fill out questionnaires about their recent eating habits. Because PD has been shown to cause changes in sense of smell and appetite, and PD medications may further change dietary preferences, it is possible that the diets of subjects with PD changed after diagnosis, making it difficult to determine whether the diet led to Parkinson's or Parkinson's led to the diet. Nevertheless, the results presented in these two studies

# CONTRIBUTIONS

We are extremely grateful to the following individuals for their generous support of HAPS. Without the continued support of our donors, none of our programs or services would be possible.

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*While we make every effort to be accurate and thorough, it is possible to accidentally omit or misspell a name. Please contact the HAPS office with corrections.*

Diet continued from page 6

agree with a previous study that tracked diet (prospectively) over time and also found that a Mediterranean-style diet was associated with a lower risk of PD. Also, the participants in these two studies, combined, were ethnically diverse, increasing the likelihood these results may be applied to a broader population.

Taken together, these studies suggest that a diet high in fish, vegetables, whole grains, fruits and legumes is not only healthy but may also be protective against Parkinson's.

References: Alcalay, R. N., Gu, Y., Mejia-Santana, H., Cote, L., Marder, K.S., Scarmeas, N. (2012). The Association between Mediterranean Diet Adherence and Parkinson's Disease. *Movement Disorders*, Published online Feb 7, 2012. doi:10.1002/mds.24918

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## Celebrate Brain Awareness Week March 12-18<sup>th</sup>

Brain Awareness Week is a global campaign that unites those who share an interest in elevating public awareness about the progress and benefits of brain and nervous system research. Celebrate Brain Awareness Week using this opportunity to learn about your brain and the brain research that is being done around the world.

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