
◆ THE DERBY CITY NSCIA NEWSLETTER ◆

JANUARY 2006

The Derby City Chapter of the National Spinal Cord Injury Association Network- Serving Kentuckiana.

Message From the President

Dear Members & Friends-

We do not have a speaker lined up as of this writing, but we hope to have one scheduled at the time of the meeting. If we do not have a speaker, a video will be shown. Pizza and soft drinks will be provided. .

I want to thank everyone who helped with the Christmas party and all of those who attended. Thanks to all of you, everyone had a good time.

February's meeting will be held at 6:30 at Frazier Rehab, 4th floor dining hall.

-David Allgood

CENTER FOR ACCESSIBLE LIVING'S PROJECTS WITH INDUSTRY (PWI) PROGRAM

- ◇ Assists persons with disabilities in the job search process, including resume development, interviewing skills, job seeking skills training, job leads, professional clothing for low income participants, & independent living skills related to finding & keeping employment.
- ◇ Trains and educates consumers and businesses on ADA issues regarding employment.
- ◇ Works with businesses to develop jobs for persons with disabilities.
- ◇ Assists in job retention when necessary.
- ◇ Provides accommodation in the job search process as needed.
- ◇ Other employment-related services per individual needs.

**For more information
contact Barbara Robbins at 589-6620 or
www.calky.org/employment.html**

A DOWNLOADABLE PAMPHLET

Understanding Changes in Prescription Drug Coverage for People with Disabilities on Medicare: A Guide for People with Disabilities, Benefits Counselors, Disability Organizations and Others on Transitioning to the Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Benefit can be downloaded from your search engine: type Advancing Independence. Click the link re: the drug coverage. The download will automatically come up. This guide was written specifically to address special concerns of people with disabilities. Written in a question and answer format, the guide includes worksheets that individuals can use in consulting their physicians about current pharmaceutical use and in comparing and selecting a plan that meets their needs.

Medicare plays a critical role in enhancing the health and independence of nearly 15 million people with disabilities of all ages, most of whom rely extensively on prescription medications. It is essential that they be able to make the best use of the new Medicare prescription drug benefit, said Bob Williams, Principal of Advancing Independence and a co-author of the report.

Given all the recent media coverage of fear and confusion on the part of Medicare beneficiaries trying to make sense of the complex details of this program and the extraordinary plan choices, we hope that this guide can be a useful tool in for people with disabilities, their family members, and others who will assist them in enrolling in a Medicare drug plan, added Jeffrey Crowley, Senior Research Scholar at the Georgetown Health Policy Institute and a co-author of

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Derby City Area Chapter
of the
National Spinal Cord Injury
Association

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

The Derby City Area Chapter of the N.S.C.I.A. is a membership organization for individuals with spinal cord injuries, their families, and health professionals. Founded in 1984 as a Charter Member of the N.S.C.I.A., it was incorporated under IRS Section 501 (c) 3 as a not for profit organization. The Board of Directors consists of the Officers, Past President and the Board Members At Large.

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NSCIA
DERBY CITY CHAPTER
NEWSLETTER

Editor- Barbara Davis
Contributor- David Allgood

Visit Our Website at
www.DerbyCitySpinalCord.org

From the Internet—editor

DAMAGED SPINE ALLOWS SIGNALS TO BRAIN
By Anna Salleh

Brains of people with a spinal cord injury can respond to signals from their lower limbs during exercise, surprising new research suggests.

This finding, although preliminary, suggests that their spinal cords may not be as damaged as doctors think. Alternatively, patients' brains could be responding to a change in blood flow while exercising.

Either way this world-first research suggests that rehabilitation could one day lead to improved function for people with injured spinal cords.

Australian neuroscientist Professor Ashley Craig of the University of Technology, Sidney and team looked into activity-based therapy using Functional Electrical Stimulation (FES).

This involves helping people with spinal cord injury trying to exercise on a bike by electrically stimulating their legs. Craig says this leads to the same brain patterns as those found in able-bodied people when exercising.

This suggests the brain is responding to signals from exercising muscles, a finding that he says may pave the way for better rehabilitation.

"We're not saying that we're going to regrow the spine," says Craig. "But it could improve their function which is something which has not really been possible until this activity-based therapy and FES came along."

Researchers became more interested in FES after the experience of Superman actor, Christopher Reeve. He was paralyzed from the neck down after a fall and needed assisted ventilation to breathe. Five years later, when doctors predicted he would never get better, he started activity-based therapy using FES and began to improve.

"He had some degree of neurological recovery," says Associate Professor Glen Davis of the University of Sydney, who is working with Craig.

Reeve began to get some extra sensation in the top of his hands and could feel tingling and heat in the lower part of his body, says Davis. The actor was even able to move his fingers a little and his breathing improved, reducing his need for artificial ventilation.

"His breathing improvement was so profound that he was able to take the plane to Australia," says Davis.

The theory was that if Reeve had started the treatment earlier he might have gotten better results, says Davis. But researchers don't know much about how the exercise worked.

The researchers set out to take the first look at the impact of FES-stimulated exercise on brain activity. Using an electroencephalogram, they measured the brain activity of

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Refrigerator Calendar

***2006**

JANUARY

2nd - Elderly & Disabled Advisory Council Meeting

Mon 1:00-2:30 p.m.; TARC; 1000 W. Broadway; Board Room.

As this is a holiday, call for alternate date.

16th - Derby City Chapter Meeting, 4th floor activity room; 6:30 p.m.

Mon Frazier Rehabilitation; Abraham Flexnor Way

21st - Metro disAbility Coalition Meeting; 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.; PVA Office on Goss Avenue.

Sat Speaker to be announced; if questions, contact Terri Leasor at 589-6620 or at mdclouky.org

FEBRUARY

6th - Elderly & Disabled Advisory Council Meeting

Mon 1:00-2:30 p.m.; TARC; 1000 W. Broadway; Board Room.

20th - Derby City Chapter Meeting, 4th floor activity room; 6:30 p.m.

Mon Frazier Rehabilitation; Abraham Flexnor Way

18th - Metro disAbility Coalition Meeting; 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.; PVA Office on Goss Avenue.

Sat Speaker to be announced; if questions contact Terri Leasor at 589-6620 or mdclouky.org

For More Information Call
David Allgood, 502-589-6620

nine paraplegics cycling with the aid of electrical stimulation to their leg muscles, called active cycling.

They also measured the brain activity of nine able-bodied cyclists, matched for sex and age, and the brain activity of the same nine paraplegics while cycling on a machine that turned its own pedals, known as passive cycling.

Craig says the paraplegics who did passive cycling showed the brain activity of someone who was not exercising, but those who were doing the FES-stimulated exercise had the same brain activity as the able-bodied exercisers.

“It’s unexpected because if the spine is broken, how are the signals getting back to the brain to activate in the way it does when the spine is not broken?” he says.

Craig says there are two possible explanations for the results. First, the spinal cord may not be as damaged as suspected and signals are actually passing through it back to the brain.

Alternatively, he says, the brain could be getting feedback via the change in blood flow that happens during exercise.

While the heart rate of the passive cyclers did not increase, the heart rate of the active cyclers did.

“If the cardiovascular system is stimulated then you get feedback into the brain,” says Craig.

He says whatever is happening, the fact that the brain is receiving feedback from muscles being exercised by FES, is exciting.

“When your cord is broken your brain changes,” he says. “The part of the brain that runs the legs doesn’t think the legs exist anymore so brain cells get redistributed to other things.”

The feedback from the FES-stimulated activity could improve rehabilitation by helping to reorganize the brain, says Craig.

His colleague, Davis, will head a four-year trial, due to begin next year, to determine how much function the activity-based therapy can return.



From the Internet—editor

QUAD SAVORS JOY OF NO MORE EYEGLASSES

By Maudlyne Ihejirika

It was a week before Thanksgiving, and Eric Johnson, a 31-year-old quadriplegic, was in the Loop office of ophthalmologist Colman R. Kraff, reflecting on God’s gift of sight.

“Sometimes it’s hard to describe to people what it’s like not to be able to see without glasses. Everything is pretty much a blob,” said the Chesterton, Ind., man, who was paralyzed in a diving accident at the age of 22.

But Johnson, who has worn eyeglasses since elementary school, was to receive the gift that day through a new national program sponsored by the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

Started by academy member Dr. Robert Maloney of California—the exclusive eye surgeon on ABC-TV’s reality show, “Extreme Makeover” - Gift of Sight offers free Lasik vision corrective surgery to quadriplegics nationwide.

It’s available to patients over 18 who have suffered a traumatic spinal cord injury and lost the use of their hands and/or arms, making it difficult or impossible to put on or take off glasses or contacts without assistance.

“I was reading this disability magazine, and there was this ad, ‘Free Lasik for Quads.’ My heart jumped. I’ve wanted it for years and years,” said Johnson. “For the longest time, people were putting on and taking off my glasses. As for contacts, getting them out was worse than getting them in, and painful, too.”

According to the academy, 13,000 Americans are quadriplegics. Johnson, who is married and has a 9-year-old stepson, broke his neck when he dived into a shallow lake in 1996.

“Wearing glasses is an inconvenience for anyone. Just think how it’s magnified if you don’t have the full use of your hands and/or arms,” said Kraff, a partner and director of refractive services at Kraff Eye Institute.

“They can’t adjust them, clean them, put them on or take them off without help. When Dr. Maloney approached me about the program, I immediately said yes,” said the ophthalmologist, who is also on staff at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago.

It is almost two weeks later, and Wednesday, a very excited Johnson returned to Kraff’s office for a checkup.

“Look up. Look way up,” Kraff tells Johnson, whose eyes are pressed against a slit lamp microscope for examining.

“It looks great, Eric. How does it feel?” Kraff asks.

Johnson beams from ear to ear. “That very first morning afterward, I woke up and just started giggling. I was like,

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LASIK FOR QUAD, CONT'D

‘Wow! I can see! I don’t have to worry about how to get my contact lens on because my wife works and she’s not always around. It takes me long enough to get ready in the morning, and now it’s one less thing I have to agonize over.

“I’ve wanted this for years, but I’m on disability and the expense was a barrier. This is just a miracle,” he said.

FINDING A JOB AND KEEPING SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

By Barbara Davis

Many people who receive Social Security Supplemental Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) are not aware that they can still work a certain number of hours each month as long as they don’t exceed the allotted amount of earnings, without losing their benefits. As a result, benefit recipients who want to work are afraid to, and some who try anyway end up losing their benefits as a result of overpayment.

The Center for Accessible Living has two programs that can help with this. One is the Benefits Plus program. Funded through Social Security, this program is designed to counsel recipients of SSI and SSDI who are wanting to work. A trained staff person will explain how Social Security’s trial work period goes into effect, and assist the consumer in completing a worksheet that will enable him or her to understand how much he or she can earn before the benefits are affected. The staff person will also answer any questions or concerns the consumer may have regarding working and benefits.

Another program is the PWI (Projects With Industry) Employment Program. The Center’s employment specialists will assist each consumer in basic job readiness and job search skills such as resume development, networking, cover letters, dressing appropriately for interviews, and other topics as needed. Accommodations are provided when necessary, and such issues as advocacy are addressed as needed. Once a consumer finds a job, the employment staff will provide mediation and job retention services as needed for a full year.

To learn more about either of these programs,

**FOR SALE!!!!**

***2003 Ford F-250 lift-equipped green/gray van;** leather seats, TV, DVD player. Playstation hookup, am-fm radio. Rick Miller, 937-2245.

***Shower Chair; 2 yrs old, negotiable; 2 RoHo cushions; low profile; \$150 each; Invacare 900 Action Power Chair; 4 yrs. Old; \$600. Call 448-5296.**

***Cookbooks for Sale:** Recipes compiled by Chapter members; \$10:00. Call David @ 589-6620.

***Video tapes for sale.** Various topics related to spinal cord injuries. Call David Allgood or Buddy Lawson.

****If assistance is needed to pay for any of the above items, contact Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corporation at 1-800-327-5287 for information on loans at 5% interest to qualified candidates.*

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO
PLACE AN AD IN FOR SALES,
CALL 589-6620. ASK FOR
BARB OR DAVID.
BUSINESSES WANTING TO
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