



Neurology Care Line

PADRECC Pathways

Houston Parkinson's Disease Research, Education and Clinical Center
Vol 2, No. 1, Spring 2003

PADRECC Sponsors Diverse Educational Programs

If you have attended any of our PADRECC programs you might have met them. Our Co-Associate Directors of Education, Naomi Nelson, PhD, RN, and Marilyn Trail, OTR, BCN, are in charge of the PADRECC educational component. Our goals are to design and produce educational programs for veterans and their families, health care professionals, and the lay public about Parkinson's disease (PD) and related movement disorders.

We publish PADRECC Pathways, and host a website (www.va.gov/PADRECC_Houston/). We work with educators at the other VA PADRECC Centers to develop and sponsor national educational programs and events.

Dr. Naomi Nelson, a counseling psychologist and registered nurse, directs the patient education program. Marilyn Trail, who directs the professional education program, is an occupational thera-

pist by profession. Both are faculty members in the Department of Neurology at Baylor College of Medicine.

Patient Education Programs:

1) Monthly Education Groups – These sessions give veterans and their family members an opportunity to talk about PD related issues and share problem-solving techniques. Guest speakers share information specific to their fields such as physical therapy and nursing.

2) Quarterly Patient/ Family Conferences – Guest speakers address PD related issues followed by a panel of our PADRECC neurologists.

3) Patient Education Committee – PADRECC educators and veterans meet regularly to discuss educational projects for the Center.

4) Patient Publications – Packets, brochures, and newsletters prepared by PADRECC are shared with patients.

Professional Education Pro-

grams: **1) PADRECC Weekly Seminars** – Programs for health care providers on PD topics such as genetics, stem cell research, and rehabilitation, with guest speakers from the HVAMC, BCM, Texas Woman's University, and the community.

2) Continuing Education Seminars – Seminars are presented on PD topics of interest to allied health professionals, nurses, and other health care providers.

3) Symposiums -- One-two day programs on PD for regional health care professionals that provide continuing education credits.

4) Professional Publications – Professional publications such as bulletins are designed for health care providers.

If you have questions about any of our patient educational programs, call 713-794-8938. We hope to see all of you at our next PADRECC Patient/Family Conference on Friday, May 9th.



L to R: Marilyn Trail, PADRECC Co-Associate Director of Education, and TWU Occupational Therapy students B. Richardson, R. Golston, and D. Dougherty.



Naomi Nelson, PADRECC Co-Associate Director of Education, directs the patient education program.

Director's Corner

Welcome to the Spring issue of PADRECC Pathways. As we move toward our third year of operation, I am delighted to give you an update on some of the activities of our clinical, research, and educational programs.

As you may know, the Houston PADRECC is one of 6 VA Parkinson's Disease (PD) Centers, along with Philadelphia, Richmond, San Francisco, Portland/Seattle, and West Los Angeles. The Centers function as part of a nationwide VHA Consortium. Together they participate in the Cooperative Studies Program investigation of deep brain stimulation (DBS) surgery for the treatment of advanced PD. As of this writing, 4 veterans have undergone DBS treatment, and we have 3 scheduled for April and May at the Houston VA Medical Center. Nationally, as of November 2002, 28 patients were randomized to the trial. Recruitment of eligible patients continues, and I am pleased with our progress.

Our PADRECC research program is in full swing with numerous projects underway. We recently submitted a grant proposal to the National Institutes of Health on self-management and quality of life in PD.

I am gratified by the large numbers of veterans and their families who have taken the time and effort to attend our PADRECC patient educational programs. On February 14, speech pathologist Teya Miller's presented a program on speech and swallowing difficulties faced by persons with PD. On May 9th, we will have a 2-hour program on the myriad of psychosocial issues that often confront patients and their families. Our special guest will be a patient who has effectively managed PD for over 10 years. She will share some of her thoughts, challenges, and coping techniques.

Our weekly PADRECC professional education programs continue to be well-attended by health care providers from the VA, Texas Woman's University (TWU), Baylor College of Medicine and the Houston area at large. Recent topics included neurofeedback, DBS, and patient case studies. On June 27 and 28, we will sponsor a symposium on PD for physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech/language pathologists. We are excited about this special program that will include presenters from both the academic and clinical

settings who have special expertise in PD.

And finally, we are involved in a note-worthy VA-wide educational and team-building effort scheduled for April. The six PADRECCs are sponsoring a PD Symposium for VA neurologists who are interested in movement disorders. The PADRECC Directors will be the principal speakers. The goals of this nation-wide effort are to inform physicians throughout the VA health system in state-of-the-art care for veterans with Parkinson's disease and related movement disorders and to establish a network for more efficient communication and cooperation..

We face a dynamic decade ahead for the treatment of persons with PD. We are very fortunate that our congressional leaders and the VA recognize the value of funding Centers of Excellence for the care of veterans living with this challenging neurodegenerative condition.

I look forward to seeing all of you in May at our next patient conference.

Eugene C. Lai, MD, PhD
Director, Houston PADRECC



Scenes from February 14 PADRECC Patient/Family Conference. Pictured Left: Mr. and Mrs. Horace Sullivan with guest speaker and speech pathologist Teya Miller, Pictured right: PADRECC Director Dr. Eugene Lai, Mr. Leldon Tuggle, and PADRECC neurologist Dr. Keyi Yang.



Rehab Corner

by Marilyn Trail, OTR, BCN

There are many aids to daily living on the market, adaptive devices to assist Parkinson's patients who have difficulty reaching, grasping, pulling, turning, standing, balancing, and walking. There are items of equipment for eating, dressing, bathing, and leisure activities. This month I will discuss a few of the smaller aids which persons with PD find most helpful.

Buttonhook: Useful when you have tremors and impaired fine motor coordination. Slide the wire hook through the buttonhole to grasp button, then pull button through hole.

Reacher: Has jaws that grips objects such as cans, clothing, medicine bottles. Useful when there is limited reach. There are various reacher designs. Some work better for small objects, others for heavier items. Can also be used as a dressing aid to pull on pants.

Steady spoon: Designed for persons with tremors or incoordination. Counter weights keep the spoon bowl level regardless of arm position. Strap on enlarged handle substitutes for weak grasp.

Foam handle curved spoons: Spoons are lightweight and have a curved handle so you don't have to bend or twist your wrists.

Under cabinet jar opener: Height can be adjusted for sitting or standing. Useful for opening any size jar or medicine bottle.

Computer Arms: Mounts to a desk or table and supports the wrists and forearms. Useful when there is tremor, weakness, or shoulder pain.

In addition there are walker bags and baskets for carrying objects, wheelchair trays and cup holders, rocker knives for cutting meat, risers for raising the height of a chair, bed, or table, book holders, card holders and writing devices.

Note: The editors do not endorse any products or companies.



Button Hook



Reacher



Easy Spoon



Built-up Utensil



Jar Opener



Computer Arms

Photos from the Sammons
Preston Company

Equipment Resources

AliMed Ergonomics Catalogue
1-800-882-8183

Computer/office ergonomic
equipment, arm/wrist supports

Bruce Medical Supply Catalogue
1-800-323-5547

Aids for daily living, medical
supplies, cushions

Enrichments Catalogue
1-800-323-5547

Aids for daily living,
supports for back, seat, hands

Sears Home Health Catalogue
1-800-326-1750

Home health supplies,
positioning devices, cushions

Smith/Nephew, Easy Living
1-800-558-8633

Aids for daily living, adaptive
equipment, positioning devices

Fincher Named PADRECC Assistant Clinical Director

Linda Fincher, BSN, RN, the nurse on the spinal cord injury Center's Clinical Nurse Coordinator unit, and as the Patient Safety Coordinator, has been named PADRECC Assistant Clinical Director, effective February 1, 2003. Fincher replaces Pam Willson, PhD, RN. Dr. Willson has assumed the position of Associate Chief of Nursing Research at the Houston VA Medical Center. Fincher, a 25-year veteran of the VA health care system, began her career in Richmond, VA, in 1959 and arrived at HVAMC in 1962. She served in Quality Management, as head

We welcome our new PADRECC Nurse Coordinator, Connie Ward, BSN, RN.C, who comes to our Center from the surgical intensive care unit. Ward, who has 12 years in the VA system, will receive her Master's in Nursing degree in May. The PADRECC staff congratulates these 3 committed nurses on their new positions.



Linda Fincher, RN

Mark Your Calendar!
PADRECC Patient/Family Conference
Coping with PD: A Patient's Perspective
May 9
9:30 AM to 11:30 AM
Houston VA Medical Center
4th floor Auditorium

PADRECC Clinic Staff Numbers
Administrative Clerk
Shawn Dowd
713-794-7841
Assistant Clinical Director
Linda Fincher, BSN, RN
713-794-7842



PADRECC staff and friends walked in the Houston Marathon on behalf of PD. Left to right, front to back: Marilyn Trail, Karon Cook, Toni Roddey, Chris Murphy, Eugene Lai, Yung Lai, Michele York, Naomi Nelson, Shawn Dowd, and Pete Murphy.

Houston PADRECC Calendar	
4/23-25/03	National VA PD Consortium Conference (for VA neurologists)
5/9/03 9:30 AM-12N	PADRECC Patient/Family Conference Coping with PD: A Patient's Perspective Houston VAMC
6/27-28/03	Assessment and Treatment of Patients with PD: A Rehabilitative Approach (2-day symposium for allied health professionals)
PADRECC Puts Veterans First	

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