

Sun 21 Feb 2010

Wow – what a turnout yesterday! We had over 60 people there. It's great to see such enthusiasm, and our excellent speaker no doubt helped bring people out. Special thanks to the UW Speech and Hearing students who came to help set up and tear down our tables and chairs.

ABOUT THESE MINUTES: I only have them mailed to the non-email members to reduce the mailing burden on the American Heart Ass'n, our parent group who does mailing for us. Those with email only get them that way. You can also find a complete searchable archive of all minutes at our website: www.SeattleYASS.weebly.com .

NEW FACES

- Gordon "Gus" Lampard and wife Diane
- Scott Coppess and wife Jena Moe
- Steve Link
- Karen Dionne
- Libby Schnabel
- Christina Dunavan

I think there were others, too, and I hope they're already on the distribution list. Great to see you all there, and I hope we can see you again!

DR. WEINSTEIN PRESENTATION

We had an excellent presentation and Q & A session with Dr. Weinstein, rehab doctor at Virginia Mason. I tried to get down the high points:

- ◆ A \$1 million grant has just been received from the federal gov't to improve cardiovascular incident response in Washington.
- ◆ There are now \$1600 caps on federal insurance for physical and speech therapy. This greatly limits the amount of care which can be provided.
- ◆ It is very important to let your political representatives and insurance companies know what needs to be done. This includes objections to the new insurance caps, and urging for longer-term insurance coverage, more coverage for early intensive therapy, coverage for group therapy, etc.
- ◆ The American Heart and Stroke Associations are also good sources for political action and information.
- ◆ Electrical muscle stimulation was noted as an important and effective therapy.
- ◆ Also Constraint Induced Movement Therapy, although this is difficult for both the patient and the caregiver and it requires at least some movement in the affected area.
- ◆ There is much research in spinal and brain injury rehab now due to the Iraq and Afghan wars. The Veteran's Administration is driving much of this, but it has application to stroke recovery too. This includes walking devices, tissue regrowth, etc.
- ◆ For continuing benefits after your insurance runs out for outpatient therapy, turn to support groups and national organizations. (But we already knew that. :-))
- ◆ Visualization to stimulate motor pathways in the brain is an interesting lab phenomenon but hasn't yet been demonstrated clinically.
- ◆ Early intensive therapy is much more beneficial than less intensive therapy over a much longer period. Children and young adults are better candidates for long-term progress.
- ◆ Pacing is important for cumulative rehab effect: don't push to exhaustion or fatigue, it takes longer to recover.
- ◆ A patient can lose 3% of their strength a day when bedridden, but recovering strength is much slower.
- ◆ Clinical depression affects about 1/3 of stroke patients. There is maximum benefit from a combination of counseling and medication, not relying on only one.
- ◆ Group therapy for stroke rehab can be very effective, but it is generally not covered by insurance. Write your political and insurance reps!
- ◆ Try to maximize your insurance coverage by not linking your claims to your stroke if possible. Carpal tunnel, diabetes, etc, should be claimed separately if possible, even if they arose due to the stroke in some way.
- ◆ Virginia Mason rehab scored in the 96th percentile nationally for quality of care and results. If the staff is the same caliber as Dr. Weinstein, that's not surprising!

Many thanks to Dr. Weinstein for taking time from a gorgeous day to give us such a wealth of information!

BOOK RECOMMENDATION

Alice Hanson recommended "Change in the Weather: Life After Stroke" by Mark McEwen: <http://tinyurl.com/yja37gt> .

FUN & GAMES

Valerie Boen recommended the Wii game "Big Brain Academy", and Rebecca recommended the website www.lumosity.com for stimulating brain games. I put links to each of these under Recreation on our website Resources page.

FLASH CARD

The city of Seattle provides the FLASH card for the disabled, giving you discounts for events, goods and services at businesses and organizations throughout King County. It's a great deal! Call 206-684-0500 or email seniors@seattle.gov.

WALKING ASSISTANCE DEVICE

An article appeared in Parade magazine on Feb 14 about a walking device called the Re-Walk. It can be strapped on and provides walking, standing, sitting, and other motions to paraplegics. See <http://tinyurl.com/yaysyk8> to read the article.

NEW SOUTH-END SUPPORT GROUP

Karen Dionne and Libby Schnabel have started a new group in Graham (just south of Puyallup) for young adult stroke survivors, called Reclaiming Ourselves. See their website at www.reclaimingourselves.com. They are full of energy and great ideas, and we wish them good luck and look forward to collaborating with them in the future!

APHASIA RESEARCH AND CLINIC

There are two programs at the UW Speech and Hearing Clinic for aphasics:

- ◆ Michael MacKinnon is seeking volunteers for a study about perception of vowel sounds. This involves 30 minutes to an hour of your time, either at the clinic or possibly at your home. He is looking for aphasics, 35 – 70 yrs old, with no hearing impairment. Contact Mike at 206-685-2140 or mikemack@u.washington.edu.
- ◆ The summer intensive clinic is coming, and you should apply as soon as possible. This clinic is intended to help aphasics develop and strengthen their communication skills. Several of our members have been to this clinic and can attest to its benefits. The clinic takes place 2 days per week for 7 weeks, for up to 2½ hours a day. Contact Jill Jones Redmond at (206) 685-7798 or summersp@u.washington.edu.

OUR WEBSITE

Get your pictures and stories up there! Contact Alice Hanson alice344@yahoo.com if you want help editing your story, or see Duane Retel or Sharon Leitheiser at a meeting to get your picture taken. Also let me know if there are any good websites we should have on our References page, or other information you think we should have up there. Check it out at www.SeattleYASS.weebly.com.

Start thinking about what you would like to do at future meetings, and give me your suggestions. Next month we will have a presentation from Outdoors For All, and member Mike Sias will give us a speech. Hope you can all make it!

Gerrit seattleyass@gmail.com 206-361-2696