



Capital Area Parkinson's Society

April 2014 Newsletter

P.O. Box 27565, Austin, Texas 78755-2565

www.capitalareaparkinsons.org

Some Parkinson's Patients Discover Artistic Side

Thursday, January 31, 2014 – HealthDay News

Some people with Parkinson's disease discover untapped artistic abilities after their diagnosis—a phenomenon that seems to be related to their dopamine-enhancing medication.

Over the years, reports have popped up in the medical literature on Parkinson's patients who suddenly discover they are painters, sculptors or writers at heart. Dan Joseph is one of them. After being diagnosed with the movement disorder a dozen years ago, the former doctor eventually took up painting. But it wasn't because he planned on becoming an artist.

A friend of mine said, "You're not doing anything. Why don't you paint?" said Joseph, a 79-year-old Santa Barbara, Calif., resident.

He decided to follow that advice and soon discovered that when he painted, his hand tremors improved. He also discovered that he actually had talent; about six years after first picking up a paintbrush, Joseph has had three solo art exhibitions.

No one knows how common it is for Parkinson's patients to find their inner painter or creative writer, according to Dr. Rivka Inzelberg, of Tel Aviv University and Sheba Medical Center, in Israel.

But when she pulled together past case reports on 14 such patients, Inzelberg found that the phenomenon does appear to be related to treatment with levodopa and so-called dopamine agonists—Parkinson's drugs that enhance the action of the brain chemical dopamine.

One patient, for example, suddenly became interested in creative writing after starting levodopa and a dopamine agonist. That interest waned, however, when the drug doses were cut, Inzelberg reported in the Jan. 14 online edition of the journal *Behavioral Neuroscience*.

Parkinson's disease arises when dopamine-producing cells in the brain die off over time. That leads to symptoms such as tremors, rigid muscles, slowed movement and balance problems. Levodopa and dopamine agonists—drugs like Requip (ropinirole) and Mirapex (pramipexole)—help make up for that dopamine loss.

But dopamine is not only involved in movement; it's also connected to the brain's "reward system." And it's well known that some Parkinson's patients on dopamine-enhancing drugs develop so-called impulse-control disorders—such as compulsive gambling and hypersexuality (commonly known as "sex addiction").

Inzelberg said it's possible that for certain Parkinson's patients, the medications lower inhibitions that once held back any creative impulses.

"It is also possible that dopamine is involved in creativity in general," Inzelberg said. That theory, she noted, is based on the observation that artists who suffer psychosis—which involves excessive dopamine activity—can become remarkably productive.

Think Vincent Van Gogh.

That's all speculation, though. Experts know little about why some people on Parkinson's drugs suddenly find creative inspiration. But it does seem to be related to the medications themselves, agreed Dr. Anhar Hassan, an assistant professor of neurology at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., who was not involved in the report.

5th Annual Cars for Parkinson's & Dystonia



Mark Your Calendars!

April is Parkinson's Awareness Month and time for our annual fundraiser supporting CAPS free exercise and dance program.

Saturday, April 26, 2014 • 10AM-1PM (Car check-in at 9AM)
The Oasis Restaurant • 6550 Comanche Trail
Austin, Texas 78732
9 Peoples Choice Awards

Live Music, Raffles, Games, Silent Auction
Admission at the door is \$7 for ages 12 and up
Car registration \$25, Day of show \$30



Saturday
May 3, 2014
Dallas, Texas

The Davis Phinney Foundation and our Texas partners invite you for a moving day of information and inspiration from leading Parkinson's movement disorder neurologists and physical therapists.

It is free for people with Parkinson's, their family and care partners, but you must register to attend at:

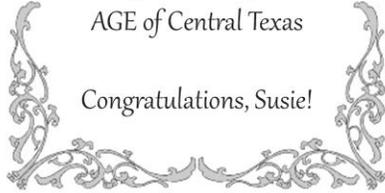
<http://www.davisphinneyfoundation.org/victory-summit>



We're happy to announce

Susie Lightfoot-Scherr

is the recipient of the 2014
"Community Service Award"
presented by
AGE of Central Texas



Congratulations, Susie!

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Amplify Austin Update: Amplify Austin was a great success for Power for Parkinson's! This event of "I Live Here, I Give Here" raised \$5.7 million for 497 Austin non-profits over a 24-hour period. Power for Parkinson's raised \$4,800 during the event. As a new program, we are thrilled to report that 47 different individuals contributed during the 24 hours and 60% of those were new donors. Thank you to all who participated.



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Do you ever make purchases on Amazon? If you enter www.smile.amazon.com and then shop, Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to Capital Area Parkinson's Society. You just have to choose us as your charity of choice. Thank you in advance for helping out with this!

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April Membership Meeting

Saturday, April 19, 2014 ■ 2:00 p.m.

Dr. Richard Dewey is a highly respected neurologist and movement disorder specialist who specializes in the areas of new therapeutics, biomarker discovery, and disease modification of Parkinson's disease. He is a Professor in the Department of Neurology and Neurotherapeutics and Director of the Clinical Center for Movement Disorders at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, Texas. He will be speaking to CAPS on the topic of "Living Well with PD: Understanding Parkinson's Disease." This event is sponsored by Teva Pharmaceuticals.

Medical Office Building, St. David's Medical Center, 5th Floor Conference Room, 3000 N. IH-35

Lunch will be provided by Medtronics following our program!