Ask the Doctor: What should I know about Aging with Spinal Cord Injury?

By: Dr. Anthony Chiodo

Systems programs throughout the United States have been working for decades to discover, develop and apply best practices to maximize the health and functioning of persons with spinal cord injury (SCI). And with that work, people with SCI are living longer.

So the natural next question is what is the effect of aging on SCI? That is a question that a new group of researchers are trying to answer.

We all know that there are typical secondary conditions after SCI such as spasticity and neurogenic bladder and bowel that are not related to aging.

We know there are conditions that occur with aging that really have no effect on function - like graying hair and drying skin. There are conditions that occur with aging that have nothing to do with SCI, like near sightedness, loss of smell and taste acuity, and loss of short-term memory.

There are conditions related to aging that might interact with SCI. These problems include decline in heart function, loss of bone density, musculoskeletal decline, and diabetes. It is unknown if changes in kidney, heart, lung and liver function in SCI are any different than they are for others who are aging.

There is also some evidence that some neurological conditions might be related to SCI. We know that some complications associated within aging occur because of the SCI, including cyst and scar formation of the spinal cord, vertebral instability, and degeneration and arthritis of the spine. It is also probable that at the level of the SCI, areas of decreased nerve function are more vulnerable to the impact of the normal loss of nerve cells that happen as we all age.

More importantly, we don’t know if there is something we can do about all these changes. We do know that exercise results in decreased musculoskeletal pain and improved heart and lung function in the able-bodied population. This is true among elite SCI athletes but what about a more normal aging population of people with SCI?

In addition, what effects do secondary complications from SCI (such as urinary tract infections and pressure ulcers) have on the aging process? One would think that they might accelerate age-related changes but little research has been done so far to address this issue.

And are there changes in the aging process for individuals with SCI because of changes in hormones such as thyroid, testosterone and growth hormone? If so, can replacement of these hormones change this aging? Currently, it is acceptable to replace thyroid hormone and testosterone in clinical practice but the replacement of growth hormone remains controversial.

So a group of researchers through the SCI Model Systems are advocating that the federal government set up a sub-agency to oversee the organization of research to answer these important questions. By answering these questions, we would learn what to tell people with SCI about what they can do to stay as healthy as possible for as long as possible.

So what to do in the meantime? Be healthy. Keep in the best of physical condition. Exercise and eat well. Keep doctor’s appointments and be sure to be attentive to monitoring of heart, lung, blood sugar, bone density and other usual health maintenance requirements. By taking the best care of yourself, you would be doing all we know now about maintaining your youth!
As we all know, the population in the United States is growing older. By the year 2030, there will be 71 million people over the age of 65, including 19.5 million who will be ages 80 and older. Women, who generally live longer, are expected to make up 56% of those age 65 and older. As the number of older adults increases so do the demands on the public health, medical and social service systems. Older adults are more likely to experience chronic conditions, which contribute to disability, decrease quality of life, and increase costs of health and long-term care (Information from the CDC website).

As life expectancy rates increase for the general population, they also increase for those living with spinal cord injuries (SCI). Advances in rehabilitation interventions, assistive technology, and early identification of secondary conditions now enable many individuals with SCI to live into their seventies and eighties. Aging with SCI brings about unique changes in functional status, psychological health and emotional well-being that are worth discussing. It is for that reason that this newsletter is focused on aging with SCI - to better prepare for and prevent aging-related issues from becoming problems.

We invite you to review the information about aging with SCI in this issue and to provide us with your own perspective and stories. Please contact us and let us know the issues and priorities important to you. You may send your letters or e-mails to: The University of Michigan Model SCI System, 300 N. Ingalls, 2A09, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-5491 or spinalcordinjury@umich.edu.

### Around the UM SCI Model Systems

**By Michelle A. Meade, Ph.D.**

The UM Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) and the UM SCI Model System are pleased to welcome **Dr. David Tulsry** to the faculty. Dr. Tulsry comes to UM from the Kessler Foundation Institute, where he served as Principal Investigator (PI) for their Spinal Cord and Brain Injury Model Systems. Dr. Tulsry is also PI on several multi-site projects associated with developing new measures of quality of life and measuring outcomes for individuals with SCI.

The UM SCI Model System held its semi-annual Advisory Council meeting on May 6, 2010. Chair Tom Hoatlin led the meeting as Council members received an update about recent events and provided their advice and opinions. PIs Drs. Denise Tate and Tony Chiodo asked members for their thoughts about topics for the next SCI Model System application. Among those that received a lot of discussion were Aging with SCI, Women with Disability, Self-Management, Employment and Community Reintegration. Members discussed the challenges of possible projects as well as their potential benefits to people with SCI. Issues of connecting with and providing information to individuals with SCI through newsletters, social media, lectures and other methods were also discussed.

Dr. Lance Goetz presented *The Spinal Cord Injury Vocational Integration Program: Current Research and Future Directions* on May 6, 2010 to a mixed audience of consumers, health care professionals and other stakeholders. Dr. Goetz is a staff physician at the Dallas VA SCI Center and Associate Professor in the Department of PM&R at the University of Texas-Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas as well as being co-investigator on a multi-site vocational integration grant. Dr. Goetz is a former resident of UM’s Department of PM&R, having completed his training in 1996. This presentation was part of the SCI Lecture Series supported by the SCI Model System grant.

**Visiting Taiwan’s Rehabilitation Hospitals**

In March of 2010, Denise G. Tate, Ph.D., ABPP, visited Taiwan as a guest of their government to meet with the PM&R faculty at the Tri Service General Hospital (TSGH) and the National Defense Medical Center. Her host, Dr. Shin Tsu-Chang, directs the PM&R department at TSGH. During her visit, Dr. Tate provided an overview of the SCI Model System programs in the U.S. as well as the work being done in Michigan. Because of their high population density, many of the SCIs in Taiwan are due to motor vehicle, bike and scooter road accidents. Their hospitals are equipped with state-of-the-art medical technology and patients receive excellent quality services without our current pressures for insurance payment and shorter hospital stays. Stem cell research protocols, water therapy, electrical and herbal therapies are also part of treatment received. Dr. Tate’s visit marks the beginning of potential future collaborations with Taiwan.

**National Conferences**

Faculty and staff from the UM SCI Model System continue to reach out to share the findings of our research with colleagues from across the U.S.:

- **February 2010: Rehabilitation Psychology 2010 Conference, Tucson, AZ**
  - Dr. Meade led a presentation on Self-Care for Rehabilitation Psychologists

- **May 2010 American Spinal Cord Injury Association (ASIA) Conference in Nashville, TN**
  - Mr. Forchheimer and Dr. Tate presented a poster entitled, Is Bladder Management Related to Depression and Employment Status After Spinal Cord Injury
  - Dr. Chiodo and Mr. Forchheimer were participants in an Expert Panel on Pain After Spinal Cord Injury, which also included investigators from the SCI Model Systems at the University of Alabama, the Kessler Foundation, and Mount Sinai Medical Center.

- **September 2010: Academy of SCI Professionals, Las Vegas, NV**
  - Dr. Meade led a symposium entitled Managing Health Following Spinal Cord Injury (SCI): Making Translations Between Theory, Research and Clinical Practice. Other individuals participating in this symposium included Dr. Mary Lou Guihan from the Hines Veterans Affairs Medical Center, and Dr. Dawn Edde from the University of Washington.
Lisa Franklin  
**Founder of Detroit’s Warriors on Wheels**  
*By Eric A. Appleberry, DDS, MS*

It was September 21, 1996; Mary (a.k.a. “Lisa”) Franklin was asleep on the back bench seat of the her family’s van, trying to catch a quick nap on the way out for the evening; one week later she woke up from a coma, in the ICU at Sinai-Grace Hospital in Detroit. A drunk driver was the cause. The other four people in the van, her husband who was driving, a cousin and two friends were all buckled into captain chairs, only had back soreness that eventually went away. Lisa’s injuries included a T-6 “incomplete” spinal cord injury.

Lisa underwent four surgeries on her back, the initial stabilization then three follow-up surgeries. She concluded her initial rehab at Sinai then transferred to the Rehabilitation Institute of Michigan. There was a brief break from the hospital for Christmas but it was February before she got to go home to stay. Initially Lisa was told she would never walk again but she found that she was able to “walk” some (actually by swinging one leg forward at a time, from the hip, while standing with the aid of a walker). This became important, as her home was not truly accessible - the doorway to the only full bathroom on the first floor was too narrow for her wheelchair.

The barriers in her home created a scary situation a few months later. She was preparing a meal and left oil in a pan cooking while she left the kitchen to answer the telephone. The oil caught fire which blocked her access to the fire extinguisher. She made her way to the front door but steps there prevented her escape. Standing in the front doorway she hollered for help. Fortunately a neighbor heard her and came to the rescue. The fire damage inside took three months to repair.

At the time of her SCI, Lisa was working for the Wayne County Payroll Department. Afterwards, she decided to stay home and work on raising her two children. At that time, her son was eleven years old and her daughter was eight. Once the children were through high school, Lisa decided to enter the 2006 Ms. Wheelchair Michigan Pageant—and was very pleased to come in First Runner Up. The pageant experience of doing something in the world of wheelchair living got Lisa thinking, *What could she do to improve accessibility at the many local situations that were not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?*

Lisa had seen what a life difference it made when her family finally moved to an open, completely accessible house in 2004. The inaccessibility of many “open to the public” local establishments then irritated her even more. But to really change the situation she saw that an organization would be needed. She decided to enlist the other local women from the pageant, and call themselves “Women on Wheels”. With an eye towards incorporation as a non-profit organization and “outside” funding, Lisa was advised to change the name so as not to exclude men, thus “Warriors on Wheels” (WOW) evolved.

Membership development was initially slow and meetings were sporadic, but with Lisa’s persistence, the organization gradually grew. When meeting someone in a wheelchair, she would introduce herself, tell the person about the organization and invite them to join. In 2008 they started having regular meetings the first Monday of each month.

Current membership is twenty-five people (including ten men). At the meetings members work on becoming thoroughly familiar with the ADA and also discuss places where they have encountered accessibility problems. When members agree action is needed, they write letters to the proprietor of the business establishment or appropriate governing agency (if it’s not a privately owned situation). The letters clearly describe the encountered problem, how it is in conflict with the ADA, and state that WOW will allow six months for the situation to be corrected before seeking Department of Justice enforcement action.

By working directly with the proprietor or governing agency (rather than first contacting the Department of Justice), WOW has been successful in correcting these situations—with smoother community relations and, importantly for small business owners, without the extra cost of attorneys and court fees.

Among their key accomplishments was the correction of a dangerous, almost foot-wide drainage grill that went all the way across the much used Hart Plaza in downtown Detroit. Over time it had sunk down to the point of potentially disrupting wheelchair users trying to cross over it. Persistent WOW letters and visits to Detroit’s City Council for a year finally got it corrected. Another one of their choice projects has been the monitoring of the Detroit Para-Transit System for compliance with the ADA.

*continued on page 4*
Community Focus:
Update from the Ann Arbor CIL

By Tom Hoatlin & Carolyn Grawi

The Bus Stops Here!
The Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living (CIL) has worked closely with Ann Arbor Transit Authority (AATA), and now the community has a safe and secure bus stop at the Ann Arbor CIL, located at 3941 Research Park Drive. AATA’s inbound bus route #6 from Ypsilanti to Ann Arbor has added stops along Research Park Drive at both the Social Security Administration and the Ann Arbor CIL. It arrives at the Ann Arbor CIL at :12 and :42 after the hour Mondays through Fridays, and at :12 after the hour weekday evenings after 6 p.m. and on weekends.

The new bus stop now allows individuals with disabilities and the general public to make a safe and independent trip to and from the Ann Arbor CIL. “Before the bus stop, getting to or from here by bus was difficult, especially for many individuals with disabilities. Members of our community had to get off the bus in heavy traffic and travel long distances to receive our services and participate in events. We now have 50% more access via public transportation than we had before,” states Carolyn Grawi, Ann Arbor CIL Director of Advocacy and Education.

For more information about the Ann Arbor CIL please visit www.aacil.org. For more information on how to travel to the Ann Arbor CIL using the bus, visit the AATA website at www.theride.org or call (734) 996-0400. You may also call the Ann Arbor CIL at (734) 971-0277, ext 16, or or email cgrawi@aacil.org. You may also contact either organization to help you plan advocacy efforts with you for your community.

Sports, Recreation and Art Programs

Looking for something fun to do? Want to get out and get some exercise? The Ann Arbor CIL offers year-round fun, exciting, and high-quality sports, recreation, and arts activities for people of all ages, abilities, and skill levels! Whether you are a skilled athlete, just a beginner or you are looking for a way to connect with others while participating in a fun activity, become a part of the action!

New Fitness Gym designed for you – and it’s free!

In December 2009 the Ann Arbor CIL’s fitness gym came alive with the donation of two high quality exercise machines. A private donor and the University of Michigan’s School of Kinesiology donated a wheelchair accessible, multi station circuit training machine. Many people who use wheelchairs are using the machine and getting great results! The fitness gym also offers free weights, a treadmill and stationary bike, a wheelchair accessible scale and two NuStep cardio cross trainers. Everyone must go through an orientation before they can use the fitness gym.

Pete Plotchev, an individual with a spinal cord injury, regularly uses the CIL’s weight room. He reports, “the NuStep is great. There isn’t another machine like it. As a paraplegic it’s really difficult to do cardio, but with the NuStep, I can do cardio. The whole gym here is completely accessible; I can get a full workout. Not many gyms offer that.”

Contact Mary Stack to arrange times to use the fitness center or to participate in the programs described above. You can also subscribe to the Ann Arbor CIL monthly e-newsletter to find out about the many great activities and classes that are being developed and planned for the fall – winter season – mstack@aacil.org or 734 971 0277 ext. 22.

Bowling: Every Thursday afternoon from 12:45pm – 2:30pm the Ann Arbor CIL hosts weekly bowling at Colonial Lanes in Ann Arbor. Come relax and socialize while bowling with your friends. Accommodations available include bowling ramps for people who use wheelchairs and guide railings for people who are blind or visually impaired. Reservations are needed, so contact Mary Stack at number provided above.

Art & Design: Through a collaboration between the Ann Arbor CIL and the University of Michigan’s School of Art and Design, individuals with disabilities in our community and students have been able to come together to share in the beauty and enrichment of clay sculpture. U of M Professor Sadashi Inuzuka and his art students partner with individuals with different types of disabilities to learn about various ways of working with clay. Together the pairs form relationships and sculpt beautiful and intriguing works of art. Contact Carolyn Grawi via e-mail at cgrawi@aacil.org for class times and availability.

Lisa Franklin, continued from page 3

The WOW organization is also very concerned with members encouraging each other to be active in their lives (and not just sitting around at home). They keep in frequent contact with one another. In good weather they go on picnics together. Twice a year they have an awards dinner to recognize special efforts by individual members. “It’s letting people know they are appreciated. It’s all about spreading the love around,” Lisa offers.

“What would I say to a person new to spinal cord injury? I would say: ‘Be encouraged; God has the final say. There is a reason you’re still here, because you didn’t have to be. So strive every day to stay as positive as possible—and try not to go into self-pity. If there’s something you can do, get up, get out and go do it. Just because the injury happened to you doesn’t mean your life is over; there’s still a whole world out there. There’s lots for you to do and lots of places to go and lots of things to see. And just by you doing that, you can encourage someone else that didn’t think they could do it.’”

If you are interested in helping to create a barrier free community in the Detroit Metropolitan area, please contact Lisa at (313) 778-9170, or email her at: LFranklinWOWinc@yahoo.com.

“What would I say to a person new to spinal cord injury? I would say: ‘Be encouraged; God has the final say. There is a reason you’re still here, because you didn’t have to be. So strive every day to stay as positive as possible—and try not to go into self-pity...’
Lifes Lessons Learned
By Marva L. Ways

Modern technology and medical advances have made living with a disability a lot easier. In 1976, when I broke my neck with a C-6/7 cervical fracture, doctors said I was lucky to be alive but would spend the rest of my life (the few years I had left) in a nursing home because I needed someone to take care of me. I am very happy to report that it has been 34 challenging, adventurous, exciting and rewarding years.

My name is Marva L. Ways and I can’t believe that time has passed so quickly. I have lived in my own home, raised my daughter (who was 6 at the time of my accident), owned and operated my own business, participated in wheelchair sports and been actively involved in my church and community.

Many of my peers have achieved accomplishments and reached goals that others thought were impossible and are living happy, healthy lives. We often share information we’ve learned while living with a disability. Sometimes this information is from medical professionals but more frequently it is gained through trial and error and from the mother of invention herself—necessity. I decided to call these gems “LIFE LESSONS LEARNED.” No one took notes or wrote anything down but as I think back we really were sharing information that someone could benefit from.

While I attempt to retrieve some of that information from my human computer banks, I would also remind you that everything does not work for everybody, so carefully evaluate every scenario to see what works for you.

In this issue it’s all about YOU, the person living with a disability.

• It is important that you educate yourself regarding your disability. Start by learning what kind of injury or disability you have and how it may affect your body. Listen and pay close attention as your body begins to speak to you regarding changes that may take place. Your body will tell you when something is wrong. When comparing your level of injury to someone else’s, remember that while the injury may be the same each individual is unique and therefore, the condition, treatment and results may be different. Communicate your concerns and questions to your doctors.

• Encourage yourself and compliment yourself for your victories. Love and respect yourself. Become confident and comfortable with your disability and others will, too.

• A healthy mind promotes a healthy body. Learn to deal with stress in a positive manner. Become proactive. You can solve, resolve or choose to move on by means of meditation, music, exercise, or saying the Serenity Prayer (just to name a few things). Don’t beat yourself up for having a bad day every now and then. Remember that bad days help us appreciate the good days even more.

• Stay active and keep as physically fit as possible. There are all kinds of sports that are open to people with SCI. Often times your participation in sports will lead to other opportunities.

• Volunteer your time. Pay it forward. Do something good for someone just because. Find your sense of purpose and something that you enjoy doing.

• Keep a journal. You can make it as simple or as detailed as you like. You never know you just may decide to write that book one day.

• Choose to drink plenty of water and drink cranberry juice or take a cranberry supplement. Eat lots of fruits, vegetables and fish.

• Remember to protect your skin and check it daily. Always practice good hygiene habits.

• Learn to problem solve and network with your peers to share solutions and exchange ideas.

• Become a mentor. Providing peer support can be a rewarding experience for both the mentor and mentee.

• Most of all try to show love and support not only to friends, family and loved ones but to all you meet and they in return will share the same with you. Love is the greatest gift of all.
Back in the Hunt
By, Robert Wolfe CTRS

After his car crash in 1983 left him with a C4/5 SCI, Brian Woodward thought his ability to hunt was gone and spent nearly 25 years thinking about what could have been. All that changed in 2008 when Brian was introduced to Wheelin Team 457. Founded in 2003, Wheelin Team 457 is located at the American Legion Post 457 in North Branch, Michigan. The team and its members have been featured on outdoor shows and news broadcasts. It has grown so fast it now has directors of hunting, fishing, archery, billiards and wheelchair sports.

Once connected with this group, Woodward was able to go to their North Branch location and try out a device that would provide the key for his return to hunting. As an individual with a tetraplegia, he required a set-up that would hold the gun in place and allow him to aim and shoot with his mouth and head. Wheelin’ Team 457 worked with Woodward and a company called Be Adaptive to design and manufacture a device for individuals with no hand or arm movement that could be operated completely with their mouth and chin.

After practicing with the device, Woodward went on a sponsored hunt and, years after he thought his hunting career was over, got his first deer. Woodward has since been on several more successful hunts, including one last year with his father who had also previously given up hunting due to a disability [Parkinson’s disease]. Woodward thanks and credits these disability groups that have made this possible. According to Woodward “This is the third time we’ve been hunting [as a disabled father and a disabled son] together in about 20 years. Nothing is more beautiful and heartwarming than to be hunting with my dad”.

To learn more and start your journey back to the out-of-doors, try contacting an organization like Wheelin Team 457 and get started.

Organizations and Resources for Adaptive Hunting:

• BE Adaptive Equipment, LLC
  P.O. Box 84, Columbia City, IN 46725
  Phone: (877) 595-5634 or (260)244-7031
  http://www.beadaptive.com

• Wheelin’ Team 457
  5150 Old State Rd., North Branch, MI 48461
  http://www.wheelinteam457.net

• Michigan Sports Unlimited, Inc.
  1915 Fordney Street, Saginaw, MI 48601
  Phone: (989) 771-5530
  www.misportsunlimited.com

Book Review: Dream Bones
By Michelle A. Meade, Ph.D.

Dream Bones by Linda Cronin is an exquisitely crafted collection of poetry and prose that speaks of the experience of living with a disability in a powerful voice while also being reflective, intelligent and at times sharing a humorous perspective on the world. Since childhood, Cronin has lived with severe rheumatoid arthritis, a condition that has caused her bones to crumble. Her mobility limitations are now similar those of people with tetraplegia. The title of the book refers to the concepts of health, memories, dreams, and reactions to disability (both the poet’s and that of those around her) that are explored throughout the collection.

I found that the scenes and emotions that Cronin describes so vividly in her book of poetry are not always easy to read. She does not gloss over the embarrassment or the awkwardness resulting from her changed appearance or of needing to take the “special” bus to school. Nor does she reassure the reader that she has become a better person through living with her disability. Instead, she gently mocks the needs of others by including A Happy Poem. Cronin does include poems dedicated to her parents, such as She, which recognizes the unwavering support that her mother has provided. Throughout the collection, the voice that the reader hears is powerful and confident. Cronin recognizes and names the barriers resulting from disability – the emotional, social, political and financial aspects – in a way that challenges other to do the same. The starkness of her voice is balanced by the empathy that she shows to others and the intelligence and humor that she displays.

Dream Bones is published by WorldTech Editions (www.wordtechweb.com) and can be purchased from World Tech, Amazon.com and Barnes and Nobles. Ms. Cronin can be contacted through her website at (www.lindacronin.net).

Flash Essay: Normal - a sample of poetry from Dream Bones

When I return to my room from physical therapy, I find my roommate, an older woman who spends her time moaning about her hip replacement, parked in her wheelchair by the window. She calls me over to her and tells me, You know I thought I was bad, until I saw you. I remain there in my wheelchair, stunned, not knowing what to say. It’s not exactly a compliment so Thank you doesn’t seem to fit. And neither do the responses How interesting or Sorry, my usual answers to her comments and questions. This time, I ignore her, and roll out of the room.

Later that day, in my second therapy session, I struggle to stand, strain to feel my feet under me, to know where they are, the way I used to. The rubble of the days pours down on me, the fight to transfer myself from the bed to the wheelchair, the battle to dress, to go to the bathroom. I lie engulfed by the debris, unable to see an end. The day I’ll get out of bed and dress myself, fix breakfast, go to work. That’s my objective, to be normal, like everyone else.

I soon realize none of the usual methods work. This is a new start, relearning how to move from one place to another, how to dress myself, tie my shoes. Normal no longer exists as a concrete fact, but slides between descriptions and definitions, blending and stirring until no one know or cares what normal is.
Upcoming Events

As part of our commitment to supporting individuals with SCI in getting out and involved in activities, SCI Access will begin to include a list of upcoming events that might be of interest. These events are not limited to those supported by the Model System, but rather are located throughout Michigan. We encourage all interested parties to double-check information before making plans to attend, as places and times of meetings sometimes change. In addition, if you are aware of events that should be included, please e-mail us at spinalcordinjury@umich.edu and we will include them in future issues.

Highlights

October 4-6, 2010: World Stem Cell Summit held at the Marriott Renaissance Center in Detroit. Additional information is available on the website (www.worldstemcellsummit.com) or can be found through contacting Casey Emmett, Director of Communications at the Genetics Policy Institute, at (Tel) 757.876.1621 or casey@genpol.org

October 21, 2010: Glen Ashlock presents Assistive Technology: Opening Up Options for Individuals with SCI at 2pm at the Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living 3941 Research Park Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48108

Nov 10th 2010: 7th Annual Salute to Veterans Gala. Michigan Paralyzed Veterans holds its annual Veterans Day fundraiser at Schoolcraft College in Livonia from 6 to 9:30. This beautiful sit down dinner honors all veterans and all our members who all have SCI.

For information see http://www.michiganpva.org/ or call Jaclyn Kochis, Director of Development & Public Relations at (248) 476-9000 ext. 06.

Grand Rapids - SCI Support Group

This group meets from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. once a quarter on the fourth Monday of the following months: January, April, July, & October. Call (616) 356-1861 or see www.maryfreebed.com/Rehab-Services/Spinal-Cord-Injury-Program/SCI-Resources/Support-Groups for More Information

Meeting place: Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital, 2nd Floor Conference Room 235 Wealthy SE, Grand Rapids, MI

Kalamazoo - SCI Support Group

This group meets on the second Tuesday of the month from 2-3:30 p.m. Contact: Karen Halsted (khalsted@dnswm.org) or call before attending. Meeting place: Disability Resource Center of Southwest Michigan, 517 E. Crosstown Parkway, Kalamazoo, MI 49001 Phone: (269) 345-1516 Ext. 63; www.dnswm.org/support_groups.aspx

Rehabilitation Institute of Michigan

- Novi Center SCI Support Groups:

Two open groups are available for people with SCI and/or family and friends interested in connecting with others for information, resources and emotional support. One group meets weekly on Wednesday from 12:15 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. The other group meets the first Monday evening of the month from 6 - 8:30 p.m. The evening group is topic-focused with break-out sessions for small group discussions. Please call (248) 305-7360 or e-mail Mary Rich (mrich@dmc.org) for more information. Meeting places: Rehabilitation Institute of MI-Nov Center, 42005 W. 12 Mile Rd, Novi, MI 48377

- Detroit SCI Roundtable:

This group is to provide opportunities to talk, listen, learn and be educated on any topic related to SCI. It meets the First and Third Wednesday of each month from noon until 1pm. For additional information call (313) 745-1055.

Meeting Place: RIM, 261 Mack, Detroit, MI 48201

- Sportsability Bowling Program:

The group meets every Tuesday from 3pm to 5pm at Garden Bowl on 4120 Woddard Ave, Detroit, 48201 for bowling. Contact Myreo Dixon at RIM Sportsability. Phone: (313) 745-6624 or mdixon@dmc.org

Ongoing Support Groups and SCI-Related Organizations with Regular Meetings

Warriors on Wheels (WOW) hold meetings on the first Monday of most months at Fellowship Chapel on 7707 W. Outer Dr. in Detroit, MI 48235. Meetings start at 2pm and generally last for 2 hours. Contact Lisa Franklin for more information at 313-778-9170 or LFranklinWOWInc@yahoo.com

The Northwest Ohio Chapter of the National SCI Association (NSCIA) holds monthly meetings at the Mulford Library Building at the University of Toledo Health Science Campus. Meetings are held on the 3rd Monday of each month and start at 6pm. Contact either chapter President, Zena Cole (419) 875-4029 or Ogie101@aol.com or Becky Gay (419) 531-6401 or beckkevn1@aol.com for more information.
The University of Michigan Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Model System publishes SCI Access. This newsletter is designed to provide information on research, treatment and social issues related to rehabilitation, spinal cord injury and disability. Established in 1985, the UM SCI Model System receives funding from the Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (Award #H133N060032). It is one of 14 SCI Model Systems in the U.S. The purpose of this research and demonstration project is to improve outcomes of medical and rehabilitative care provided to individuals with spinal cord injury.

Denise G. Tate, Ph.D., ABBP, Co-director, Co-Principal Investigator
Anthony Chiodo, MD, Medical Director, UM SCI Program; Co-Director, Co-Principal Investigator SCIMS

Regents of the University of Michigan: Julia Donovan Darlow, Ann Arbor; Laurence B. Deitch, Bingham Farms; Denise Ilitch, Bingham Farms; Olivia P. Maynard, Goodrich; Anika Fischer Newman, Ann Arbor; Andrew C. Richner, Grosse Pointe Park; S. Martin Taylor, Grosse Pointe Farms; Katherine E. White, Ann Arbor; Mary Sue Coleman (ex officio)

Newsletter Editing and Review: Michelle A. Meade, Ph.D., (editor), Eric Appleberry, Linda Borle, Tom Hootin, Cynthia Kay Morefield, Martin Forchheimer, Marva Ways

SCI Research Going on at the University of Michigan

The University of Michigan is a leader in research to improve life for individuals with SCI. Some of our studies are funded under the SCI Model System and the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), while others have different funding sources. Below is a list of projects which are currently recruiting individuals with SCI.

Assessment of the Efficacy of Venlafaxine HCI as a Preventative Therapy for Depression and Pain Following New SCI
This study looks at how well the antidepressant, venlafaxine XR (Effexor XR®), treats pain and mild/moderate depressive symptoms in people with SCI. Participants are randomly placed into either a placebo control group or a group that receives the study medication, and then are followed for 6 months. Contact the recruitment coordinator, Linton Cuff at 734-936-9334, or e-mail spinalcordinjury@umich.edu, to find out more information.

Motor Recovery Index: A Validation of an Outcome Measure in Incomplete SCI
The goal of this study is to validate a measure of motor recovery (the UAB Motor Recovery Scale), at different times after injury. This scale will help researchers better evaluate the effectiveness of treatments for SCI recovery. We are currently looking for individuals with traumatic SCI who are at least 3 years post-injury. For more information about this study, please contact the study coordinator, April Saval at 734-615-6718.

Development and Validation of the Thoracic-Lumbar Control Scale to Measure Strength and Coordination of Trunk Muscles
This project seeks to create an accurate, reliable tool for assessing thoracic (trunk) muscle activity and function after an SCI. Individuals may be eligible to participate if they have paraplegia or an incomplete SCI (ASIA C or D) SCI. For more information about this study, please contact the study coordinator, April Saval at 734-615-6718.

SCI Research Registry
The SCI Research Registry is a bridge between individuals with SCI wanting to be involved in clinical research and investigators trying to improve treatment and quality of life for this population. Any individual with a SCI is welcome to join. Access to the Registry is controlled to ensure your safety and confidentiality. For more information, or if you would like to join, please contact Jane Walters at 734-763-9773 or email SCIRegistry@med.umich.edu.

Controlled Trial of Venlafaxine XR for Depression after SCI
The antidepressant, venlafaxine XR (Effexor XR®), is being examined to determine how it works in treating major depression for people with SCI. Participants are randomly assigned to either a placebo or the study medication and then followed for three months. For additional information about this study, contact the recruitment coordinator, Linton Cuff at 734-936-9334 or e-mail spinalcordinjury@umich.edu.