IN THIS TOGETHER
parkinson's
WESTERN AUSTRALIA
VOLUME 52 - ISSUE #2 - MAY/JUN/JULY 2020

parkinson's NEWS

APRIL WAS WORLD PARKINSON'S MONTH

In honour of Dr. James Parkinson, by Senior Parkinsons' Nurse Specialist, Janet McLeod

Dr James Parkinson was a general practitioner who was born, married, practised medicine and buried in the parish of Shoreditch in London's East End.

James was the son of an apothecary, John, and Mary Parkinson and was the second of six children although sadly, only three survived into adulthood.

It was thanks to his experience of watching his father mixing and making potions and pills that his description of the 'pill rolling' tremor originated and remains part of the classic description of tremor to present times.

His interest extended beyond medicine and included politics. It was his political ideals which almost cost him his life and thus would have denied medical history the first complete description of the symptoms which he observed in six people in the area.

Indeed he was brought before the Privy Council in 1794 accused of plotting to kill or discuss killing the King, Mad King George, but due to his quick thinking he avoided imprisonment or death.

We have no photographs of Dr Parkinson because photography was not invented until 1838, fourteen years following his death. There is however a brief verbal description written by a friend Gideon Mantell who was in his twenties when he described Parkinson in his fifties.

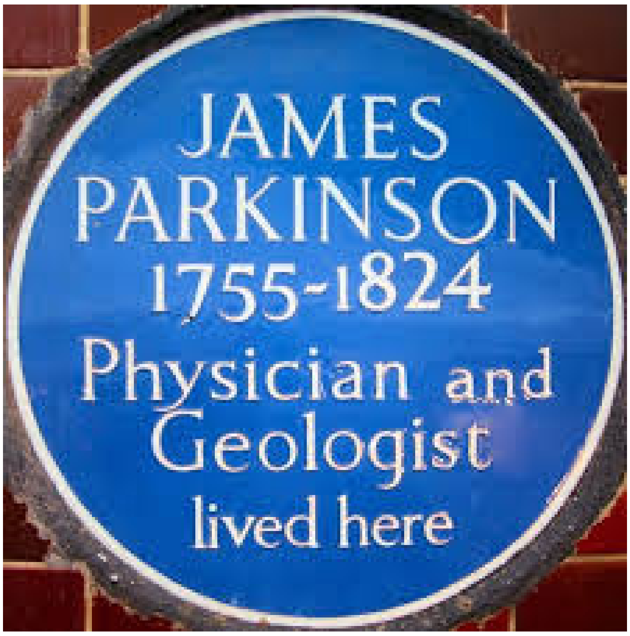
He writes, "Mr Parkinson was rather below middle stature, with an energetic intellect and pleasing expression of countenance, and of mild and courteous manner: readily imparting information either on his favourite science, fossils, or professional subjects."

In 1817 Dr James Parkinson's published the 66 page Essay on The Shaking Palsy in which he accurately described the condition which later came to bear his name. This was one of many publications but remains his most famous and remembered piece of work.

Today his former home in 1 Hoxton Square Shoreditch has been demolished and rebuilt but remains a landmark with the blue plaque acknowledging its history.

It is currently used as apartments and a popular casual restaurant occupies the ground floor. In 2015, I enjoyed a day exploring the Church of St Leonard's and had lunch in the restaurant – on going downstairs to the bathroom in the basement it was easy to imagine the Parkinson's family working and living there.

Thankyou James Parkinson for your interest and literary skills used to describe the condition we all hope will be beaten one day.



LOCATION/POSTAL ADDRESS
THE NICHE, 11 ABERDARE ROAD,
NEDLANDS, WA 6009
TELEPHONE (08) 6457 7373
FAX (08) 6457 7374
FREECALL 1800 644 189
EMAIL INFO@PARKINSONSWA.ORG.AU
WEBSITE PARKINSONSWA.ORG.AU

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
PARKINSON'S NEWS 13 JULY 2020

ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES
INFO@PARKINSONSWA.ORG.AU

Brenda's Bulletin

I don't think in anyone's wildest dreams we could have imagined the current scenario in W.A., Australia and the world.

In the February newsletter, I talked about New Year's resolutions and setting a few really achievable goals. Now more than ever, setting small realistic goals is important.

Many of you who have been reading My Bulletin over the years could be forgiven for thinking that I feel exercise will fix all our problems!! Of course I know it will not, but now more than ever it is important – not just to get the muscles moving and the feel good endorphins flowing but to smell the fresh air, hear the birds singing, see the beautiful sunrise and sunsets we have in WA at this time of year.

If you attend a support group you will appreciate these have all been cancelled until further notice. We will keep you posted via our website and newsletter when this changes.

Unfortunately due to budget constraints, Parkinson's WA will no longer be able to fund ongoing support program/activity classes – Singing, Dancing, and Yoga (more details in the newsletter.)

A big thank you to the South of Perth Yacht Club for hosting our annual Twilight Sailing mid-February. It was a sensational evening and I trust it will be on our calendar in 2021.

Seminars cancelled will be rescheduled later in the year and again we will inform you via our newsletter, website and social media.

Thankyou to those who have recently donated to support the Parkinson's Nurse Specialist service – now more than ever it is important to call the Parkinson's WA office on 6457 7373 if you need to contact the Parkinson's Nurse Specialist Service.

To my Nepal followers!

So much for trip number 15 to Dolpo on the Nepal, Tibeten border in April!! I have moved my dream to November.

Meanwhile I am feasting on the 100s of photos I have on my office wall and at home, and reading a book on climbing Mount Everest – "Into Thin Air"!

We are all in this together.

Take care,
Brenda.

DONATIONS AND SPONSORSHIPS

Thank you to all those who supported us during the months of February, March and April. Your generosity helps make a difference in providing essential service in WA to people living with Parkinson's. All donations are gratefully received and go towards implementing programs targeted at meeting the needs of the WA Parkinson's community.

Thank you also to those who wish to remain anonymous.

Regular Giving

D Brennan
M Charleston
J Ward
L. Thomas
J. Mitchell
K Winton
F Reed
J Zoiti
M Brennan
R Mattia

Community and Corporate

City of Joondalup
PayPal Giving Fund Australia
Calm Abiding Meditation Group
Anglican Parish Turquoise Coast
My Cause Online Causefunding
Combined Probus Club of Murray District (WA) Inc
St John Paul Craft Group

In Memorium

J. Fitzhardinge

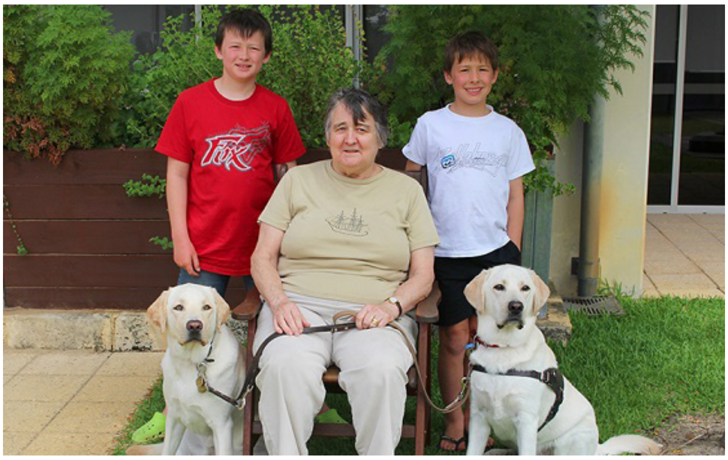
J Patroni
J Reynolds
J Somers
J Stock
J Want
K Dean
K Hannaford
K Power-Craig
K Rogers
L Hunter
L Kennedy
L Rowe
L Santos
L Worland
M Anstey
M Brisley
M Halsmith
M Hart
M Hudson-Ansell
M McCreery
M Mills
M Monneron
M Terry
N Aldridge
N Simunovich
P Gildersleeve
P James
P Ward
R Masters
R Moon
R Robinson
R Savy
R Tear
S Chapman
S Doble
V Perselo
V White
W Creswell
W Mettam
W Tweedie
Z Ackland

GIFTS IN WILLS- Getting to know the individual behind the Gift

Jean Arkley, an ardent Parkinson's Kingsley support group and Parkinsong member has recently declared her intention to leave a legacy gift to Parkinson's WA that will contribute to the Parkinson's Nurse Specialist's team in the community.

Having been diagnosed with Parkinson's five years ago, Jean has continued to lead a 'full' life. She speaks highly of the Parkinson's Nurse Specialist who visits her regularly, "They have so much knowledge, so much guidance to offer. They are so perceptive and always have time for me," says Jean.

"Every week, I look forward to the ParkinSong (singing) sessions and the monthly support group meetings. Parkinsong keeps us happy, we sing songs suited for each occasion and created great camaraderie with others in the same situation. The support group provides a wonderful platform for us to share, it helps each of us as well as our carers and partners as we share this journey,"



Jean Arkley, her two grandsons and Guide Dogs

"Isolation is the greatest enemy. Parkinson's WA, through the Parkinson's Nurse Specialists, support groups and support programs have helped me maintain a good quality of life, so I would like my gift to help others in the same way. Parkinson's WA has done great work, I want it to continue to grow and offer a lifeline to people diagnosed with Parkinson's,"says Jean.

Jean and her late husband Tom have given legacy gifts to support other causes in WA as well. We feel blessed that we can do something in these areas and our hope for the future is for more philanthropists to support not for profit organisations in the community. Jean's gift will be dedicated to support the Parkinson's Nurse Specialist program. Thank you Jean.

For more information on leaving a bequest to Parkinson's WA, please call us on (08) 6457 7373 or email: fundraising@parkinsonswa.org.au

FUNDRAISING & EVENTS NEWS

Little did any of us know what was around the corner in the arena of fundraising – how quickly the donation dollar would be withdrawn due to uncertainty. The current situation is impacting greatly on all not for profit organisations so we will tighten our belts and know that philanthropy will recover and that we will survive until that happens.

Kym Elson – Dart's & PJ Night

Thanks to Kym Elson's father for staging a Dart's & PJ Night at the local Merredin Ladies Dart Association. Her dad was diagnosed with Parkinson's recently so Kym, the Dart Association ladies and work colleagues at Northey Sales Merredin have generously donated to support Parkinson's WA.

The Ladies of the Merredin Dart Association in their PJ's

TWILIGHT SAILING

What better way to enjoy a setting sun than on the water itself? On Wednesday 19 February, Parkinson's WA had its annual Twilight Sailing event at the South of Perth Yacht Club and couldn't have asked for better weather.

Over 40 Parkinson's WA members enjoyed an evening of fun, relaxation and wonderful company sailing the Swan River. Member Caroline Mills was especially impressed .

"It was a wonderful adventure," says Caroline, about her first ever sailing experience.

"I've never done anything like this before and floating along on the water and watching the sunset was amazing. I loved every minute of it!"

Yet again it was a wonderful evening, thank you to everyone who came along and joined us out on the water.

FUNDRAISING & EVENTS NEWS

We would like to acknowledge the ongoing support from the Lions Clubs of -Ballajura, Bull Creek, Esperance, Leeuwin, Narrogin, Nedlands and Rockingham for their generous donations over the years.

It seems so long ago because so much has changed in our world but on Wednesday March 4th, Dorothy Koh, Donor Relations Manager and Janet McLeod attended a meeting of the Claremont and Nedlands Lions Club.

This was the third time Janet McLeod has represented Parkinson’s WA at their annual Cheque Presentation night. This amazing group of committed humanitarians spend the year raising funds which are then allocated to not for profit organisations of their choice.

As in so many cases of philanthropy, their interest in Parkinson’s grew from both a former and a current member having been diagnosed. This year, Claremont and Nedlands Lions Club presented a cheque for $2,000.00 which Janet assured them would be used to support people with Parkinson’s in WA. Below is Club President Bob Carroll presenting the cheque. Many thanks to all the hard working members of this long standing service club.

Parkinson’s Nurse Specialist Janet McLeod and
Club President Bob Carroll

Dear Nurses,

I hope you can give me some advice regarding my elderly husband who has been diagnosed with Parkinson's for over 20 years.

He and I are fortunate in that we have a Level 4 package of care with help coming in five days a week for showering assistance and respite for me once a week. This means that there are a lot of carers coming into our home and my children are concerned that this is putting both of us at risk of coming into contact with Covid- 19. What should we do – should we cancel all this care coming in? I do not feel that I could manage our situation without the showering help but I cannot meet my 'girl' friends for a coffee which I used to do on my respite - perhaps I should cancel that?

Our goal is to remain together in our own home for as long as possible.

Yours,
Jill and Jack of Jandakot

Dear Jill (and Jack)

Your concerns and those of your adult children are being shared by so many people all over the world at present. There is no right or wrong answer to your question. In our experience, many people have opted to continue with having care coming into their homes to maintain them in their safe environment and the rest have made a decision to cease care coming in to avoid exposure to the virus.

It sounds as if your care package is essential to you both and thankfully the care providers are classified as being essential workers. If you decide to keep the respite hours perhaps you could take a book or some knitting down to the bottom of the garden and enjoy some solitude and respite there. Your and Jack's ability to stay at home as long as possible depends on that package and we, the nursing team, support you in this decision. Certainly in the present situation your home is the safest place for you both.

As you are aware by now your Parkinson's nurse specialist has spoken to both your care providers and your daughter and everyone is aware of how you both feel and are supporting you both from the end of the phone. Best wishes and we look forward to our first face to face meeting when this situation is over.

Yours,

The Nurses

For more information visit
www.parkinsonswa.org.au
or call: 6457 7373

FROM THE NURSES’ DESK

Dear Members and Friends,

As you can imagine there are not many nurses at their desks at the present time. As you are aware, we are all still working but doing it in a sightly different manner.

We are mostly working from home and when we do have to come into the office to pick up our files for the coming week we are staggering our days in order to maintain safe social distancing.

Our interactions with you are currently being done by phone using whichever app or mechanism works best for you.

The decision to suspend home visiting was made quite early in the development of the Covid -19 crisis because we felt that the majority of you fall into the vulnerable group and it did not seem to be good nursing practice for the Nursing Team, to travel from home to home and put you at risk. Within a day or two of us making that decision it was proven to be the correct one!

In spite of the fact that we are not free to knock on your door, we are still available for you. In fact on some days we are making more contacts than previously possible. Please feel free to call the office if you have any concerns or queries during these challenging times. My own telephone contacts have widened to include the Pilbara, the Kimberley and even someone from Victoria who used to live in Perth and remembered about our availability.

I was really intrigued and pleased to see that the tagline of Parkinson’s Australia seems to have become a catch cry for this current health crisis – IN THIS TOGETHER. How uplifting is that phrase?

On a personal note I would like to share a snippet of trivia and a new motto which should become our personal battle cry. Many of you will remember that over 10 years ago I changed my surname to McLeod as a result of my remarriage.

Did you know that the Clan McLeod motto is HOLD FAST?

I now give you my personal permission to use those two words at any time until we all come out on the other side of our current situation then I will reclaim them.

Yours
Janet McLeod OAM

HOLD FAST

INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY IN 2020 -THE YEAR OF THE NURSE AND MIDWIFE

May 12th is recognised globally as International Nurses Day because it marks the anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale who was born in Florence, Italy in 1820 and is celebrated as a social reformer and the founder of modern nursing.

It is timely to reflect on the changes she introduced to healthcare . These led to a marked reduction in mortality rates in the hospitals during the Crimean War. These were hospital sanitation and hygiene - she introduced hand washing as an innovative measure in addition to improving ventilation and introducing distancing between hospital beds!

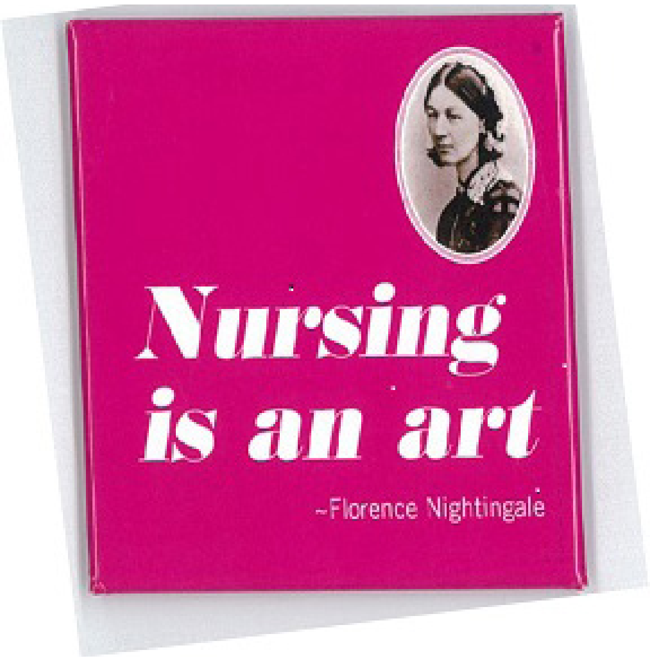
Obviously a woman with vision!

Parkinson's WA would like to recognise our Parkinson's Nurse Specialist team who have continued with supporting their patients during the current Covid-19 crisis. All our nurses are passionate about our service's ability to visit people with Parkinson's in their own homes where the most impact of Parkinson's is experienced and it was with regret that they had to turn to telephone, Face Time and Zoom meetings with you.

In spite of these challenges, our amazing team of professional nurses adapted to the changes and continue to provide practical and emotional support and education through this crisis. In reality it would have been risky to continue to do home visiting thus exposing you to potential spread of the virus but the changes the nurses had to implement meant a huge shift in practice for them.

Many thanks to Jo Chadwick, Heather Johnstone, Shirley Barclay, Fiona Roscoe and Kayleigh Rawle in the metropolitan area and to Nerolie Lyle and Liz Bickley in the Bunbury area for your flexibility and dedication.

Champions one and all.



Snippets from our Support Groups

If you are not a part of a support group but would like to be, in this and future editions of the newsletter, we will share some snapshots of the groups, what they bring to the participants and the many activities they offer over the course of the year.

Midland – Harry and Wilma East

As the saying goes, 'every cloud has a silver lining'. Our silver lining is, making us think outside the square, which our committee is trying to do, as we come to realise our present position of self isolation is going to be longer than we at first thought.

We are organising to stay in touch with our members by email or phone, keeping them updated with the Parkinson's News, and asking them to contribute by telling us and sending photos of how/what they are doing to keep themselves occupied at home 24/7.

Hopefully first on the list will be their daily exercise!!! Then...
Getting back into some former shed and or home crafts (a good challenge,)
Trying to grow some winter vegies, herbs or flowers in raised beds, pots or hanging baskets,
Doing jigsaw puzzles, playing card games, mahjong, scrabble,
Phoning family and close friends, especially those living on their own on a regular basis,

Hopefully our known good cooks will contribute their favourite healthy recipes plus some yummy sweet treats for us to bake, to help cheer us up!

To all our fellow Parkinson's people, keep positive and happy and stay safe.

Fremantle/Melville ~ Mary Maxwell

Our meetings for 2020 began back at the Millers Bakehouse Museum in Palmyra. We had used the A.H. Bracks Library facilities while the Bakehouse underwent several months of renovations. While the library facilities are very modern, it is wonderful to be back at the convenient and historic Bakehouse, which now features new carpet, fans, and air conditioning.

Our February speakers were representatives from ParkC, a research group based at Curtin University. ParkC also has affiliations with the Cambridge Parkinson's Disease Research Clinic, UWA, ECU and Parkinson's WA. Some of their current studies include pain in people with Parkinson's, Parkinson's effect on language and speech, and non invasive brain stimulation. Several support group members have agreed to provide information to the students for their research.

We were saddened by the passing of Margaret Kingston, wife of one of our members. We wish Kevin and their families all the best for the future.

Our March speaker was a volunteer representative from 'Stay on Your Feet'. We were able to hear about some practical ways to avoid falls and received printed material that gives advice about staying healthy and strong. Being in good physical condition aids in avoiding falls. We wish all the Parkinson's Support Groups good luck and good health especially during this difficult period.

Movement – “Just Do It”

Yes, it’s not as simple as popping down to your local gym, however, there are many trained Allied Health Professionals such as Accredited Exercise Physiologists (AEP’s) or Physiotherapists who can help by providing information on which exercises are better than others, and how to do this in a safe and supportive environment.

Research conducted by the Parkinson’s Foundation has shown that increasing physical activity to at least 150 mins per week can slow the decline in quality of life. Regular exercise can also improve gait, balance, flexibility, cognition and grip strength while reducing tremors, depression and fatigue.

Exercise can also produce a significant neuroprotective benefit, helping to control body movement by protecting the cells in your nervous system from damage, degeneration, and death which all helps to slow symptom progression.

Adhering to exercise is a challenge for everyone, with common barriers often listed as; “I’m too tired or lazy”, “I don’t have time,” “it’s boring”, “I can’t afford it”, “I have pain” and “I fear hurting myself”. People with Parkinson’s also cite fear of falling, lack of time and low outcome expectation.

Exercising in a supported group setting with friends and family can help with motivation to exercise as will finding something you enjoy and makes you happy, such as playing golf, boxing, dancing, swimming or aqua aerobics, cycling, walking, tai chi, yoga, or stretching.

Strength training is extremely important and can be done in a specialised and supervised gym setting or in your own home using simple tools such as towels, tins of food or milk bottles filled with water, rice or sand.

The important thing is to find something you enjoy and start slowly. This could be a short walk around the house or out to the letter box two or three times a day, gradually increasing your activity as you get stronger and more confident. The most important factor is to keep moving and don’t be afraid to ‘just do it’.

Debbie Cooper
Accredited Clinical Exercise Physiologist
Curtin University Health & Wellness Clinic

Movement – "Just Do It"

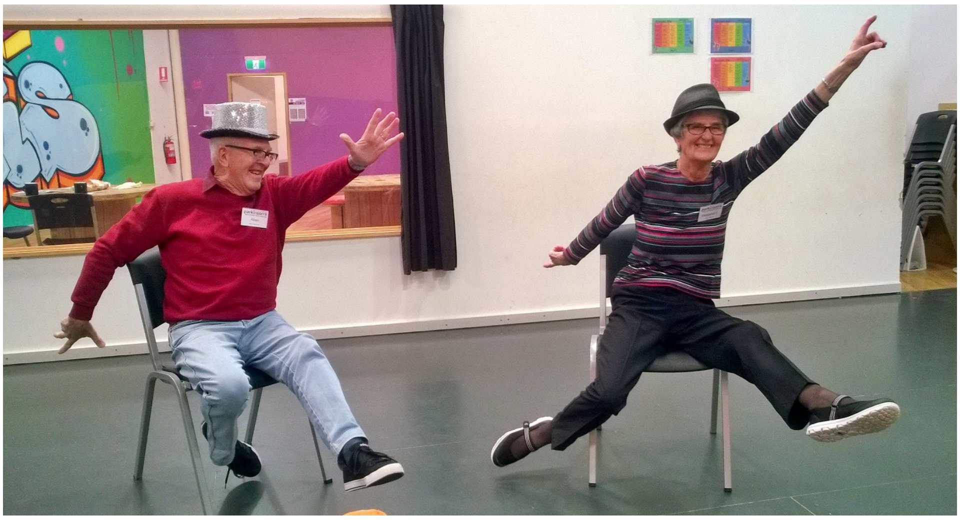
Nike implemented this famous slogan in 1988. Ironically the slogan was inspired by the last words of Gary Gilmore, a murderer on death row who demanded 'Let's do it' as he faced the firing squad in 1977.

Now, I'm sure there will be many people who see a similarity between undertaking regular exercise and facing a firing squad, however, it doesn't have to be this way. Exercise can and should be fun. There are many ways to exercise in a social setting where you can connect with family or friends and undertake activities that make you happy.

We are regularly bombarded with messages to exercise or be more physically active, to sit less and move more. This information can be overwhelming especially when you have been diagnosed with a condition that could make this more challenging.

So why should you be more physically active? To answer this we need to ask ourselves: Do we want to feel better and have more energy?

We know that regular exercise can help control your weight, reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular disease, stroke, metabolic syndrome, high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, depression, anxiety, many types of cancer, arthritis and falls. It has also been shown to improve cognitive function and mood, boost energy, promote better sleep, and improve your sex life, all contributing to improved quality of life.



However, as we age we lose muscle mass and strength which may result in an increased risk of falling or at least the fear that we are going to fall which reduces confidence and further limits activity.

The Australian Physical Activity guidelines recommend that for good health we exercise at a moderate intensity for 2.5 - 5 hours per week (ie swimming, walking, light cycling) or 75-150 mins per week at a vigorous intensity (fast paced jogging or fast cycling), plus between 2-3 resistance training sessions.

These numbers can be quite challenging to meet so it's important to remember **any** exercise is better than none and that it's ok to start off slowly and endeavour to increase the time spent exercising each week. With Parkinson's, the idea of exercising can be so much more challenging.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Bullcreek/Leeming ~ Valerie Cudmore

How a year can change! 2020 started off for our support group with a large gathering of folk in February, sharing news and hopes for the coming year (some of which included overseas travel!). By the time of our March meeting there were only a few brave couples who came to listen to our Parkinson's Nurse Specialist, Kayleigh, as she gave a presentation about 'The gut and its relationship to Parkinson's.'

It was extremely interesting and brought out much discussion. We are so grateful to our Nurses, especially in this International Year of the Nurse and Midwife. So, now we are all hunkered down, grateful for the phone and internet (and jigsaws and board games!). Stay safe everyone.

For more information regarding our support groups, visit www.parkinsonswa.org.au/whats-on/support-groups/, call (08) 6457 7373 or email info@parkinsonswa.org.au

Unfortunately, due to the current pandemic, all of Parkinson WA's support groups have been suspended until further notice. We will post updates on our website and Facebook and endeavour to keep our West Australian Parkinson's community up to date.

SOUTH & EAST METRO

- BULLCREEK/LEEMING
- FREMANTLE/MELVILLE
- GLEN FORREST/MUNDARING
- ROCKINGHAM
- MIDLAND
- ARMADALE
- PARKINSON'S CARERS SOUTH

NORTH & WEST METRO

- KINGSLEY
- MORLEY
- WESTERN SUBURBS
- PARKINSON'S CARERS NORTH

REGIONAL

- ALBANY
- BUNBURY
- BUSSELTON
- NARROGIN/DARKAN
- LOWER SOUTH WEST (MANJIMUP)

The Future of Support Programs

Unfortunately due to budget constraints, Parkinson's WA will no longer be able to fund ongoing support program/activity classes – Singing, Dancing, and Yoga.

We appreciate many of you have benefitted substantially from these classes over the years. We appreciate the benefits of these activities and are working hard to identify alternative options in the community for you all to participate in.

We know that many of you already take part in community based activities and also enjoy the social interaction these bring.

Our support programs will not resume but we will however provide you with information on alternative programs in our next newsletter and on our website.

RESEARCH REVIEW

Pathological Gambling in Parkinson's – What are the risk factors and what is the role of impulsivity?

The following article is an overview of a study carried out in Germany and published in 2017. The nursing team felt it was timely to report on it during our current time of social distancing and self isolation because, as we are all aware, gambling has changed greatly in recent years and is now freely available on all our phones, tablets and laptops.

The article by the researchers points out that the incidence of pathological gambling in Parkinson's patients is significantly greater than in the general population. In 1992 the World Health Organization (WHO) defined pathological gambling as an impulse control disorder which causes excessive, uncontrollable gambling despite financial losses and social problems. More recently, in 2013, the American Psychiatric Association grouped pathological gambling together with substance related and addictive disorders and renamed it gambling disorder.

It has been observed that pathological gambling occurs more frequently in people living with Parkinson's than the general population. The figures range from 3.4 - 6.1 % compared to 0.25-2% for those without a diagnosis of Parkinson's.

What are the Risk Factors?

Several risks have been identified: Younger patients will identify as having higher scores in tests identifying novelty and impulsive behaviours. Having a personal or family history of alcohol abuse. Being male and smoking in the past also appears to increase the risk.

These risks factors are seen in both the Parkinson's and non Parkinson's population however in the Parkinson's population early onset (diagnosis) heightens the risk.

The role of Parkinson's Medications in Gambling

The article states that even in the first reports of gambling in the Parkinson's population a clear correlation (or link) was observed with the introduction or dose increase of medications aimed at increasing dopamine. The researchers did not lay blame on one brand of medication over another but they do suggest that levodopa seems to have a lesser role to play in the development of gambling and they go on to describe the emergence of dopamine agonists as being a major factor.

Genetic factors in Gambling and Parkinson’s

Because not all people with Parkinson’s develop gambling associated with medications and because most of those who did develop gambling problems did so when taking medication the researchers looked for a genetic vulnerability. This complex arm of the study looked at genetic mutations on a variety of dopamine receptor genes and resulted in the use of words such as ‘unclear, might, may and suggests.’

Neurofunctional changes in Gambling and Parkinson’s

Studies comparing neuronal activity and patterns in people with Parkinson’s who gambled and those who did not found differences in the activity of areas associated with the mesolimbic reward system. Several very complex studies suggest that those patients who experience pathological gambling may be quicker and better at learning, but in contrast while learning through loss, the neuronal activity was lower.

Gambling and Parkinson’s and Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS)

The studies looking at this combination were interesting – in most cases of patients who had DBS, the gambling resolved following the surgery but this would be associated with a reduction or cessation of medications. In another group,more impulsivity was seen after DBS and this may be linked to the site of the DBS in a more limbic part of the brain, rather than an area related to motor control.

Conclusion

Further research is required to investigate why, how and to whom pathological gambling may develop in the Parkinson’s community. This was a complex study which was well written up but it in no way addresses the personal pain and social issues which result from pathological gambling. Always remember to discuss any tendencies related to gambling or side effects of medication with your treating medical specialist.

Pathological gambling in Parkinson’s disease: what are the risk factors and what is the role of impulsivity?
Heiden P. Heinz A. & Romanczuk- Seiferth N. European Journal of Neuroscience 2017 Vol.45 pp.67-72

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH SMART DEVICES & LANDLINES

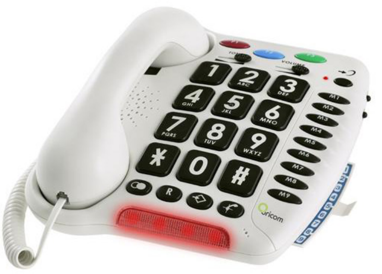
While the whole of Australia is self-isolating and social distancing during the Coronavirus pandemic, keeping in touch with friends and family using smart (electronic) devices and landline telephones has become of utmost importance.

Many of us take for granted the convenience of sharing information and talking to our friends and family over the phone. However, for people who have a visual impairment, are hard of hearing, have trouble projecting their voice or difficulty pressing small buttons, using a telephone or device can be a frustrating task. Fortunately, there are many products available to assist people to keep in touch.

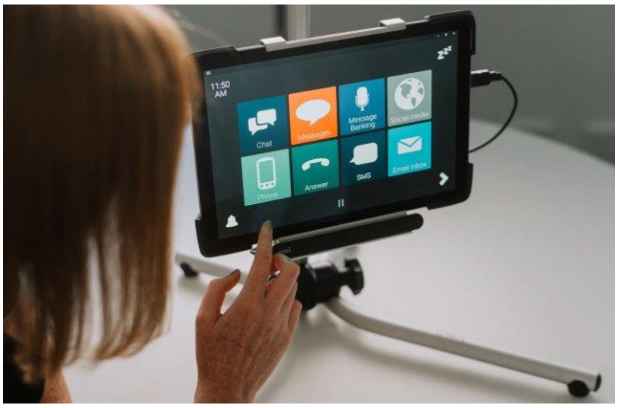
Most commercially available landline telephones available in Australia should have a raised dot on the number '5' key. This is to help people with a visual impairment or people who dial by touch, to dial without the need for visual cues.

Some other assistive features that are available on a range of phones include:

Big Buttons: This feature makes the numbers and buttons easier to see and press. The 'Oricom Care100 Amplified Big Button Telephone' is one example of big button telephones available.



Switch adapted: For people who have difficulty pressing small buttons, a large button or "switch" can be attached to some phones to allow one touch answering and when coupled with other features (such as delayed dialing) it can be used to dial.



One-touch or speed dial: This allows you to dial stored numbers by pressing fewer buttons than the original number.

Speakerphone: Allows the user to talk hands-free.

Phone holder: Where a person may not have the grip strength to hold the receiver a product such as the North Coast Quad Phone Holder may assist. It is a U-shaped, plastic covered metal frame with hook and loop fastening strap that acts as a holder for a telephone receiver. It hooks over the user's hand. This device provides the user more privacy than the speakerphone function.

Hearing aid compatibility: This feature allows people with telecoil-equipped hearing aids to communicate effectively over the telephone without feedback and without the amplification of unwanted background noise.

Flashing/vibrating ringer: A flashing light or vibration alerts the user that there is an incoming call, particularly helpful where a person is hard of hearing.

Voice amplifier: A pitch and volume control feature can adjust incoming speech.

If you would like more information about communications products or would like to make an appointment, please contact Indigo on 1300 885 886, or email help@indigosolutions.org.au

FOLLOW US:

CONTACT US:
T: (08) 6457 7373
E: info@parkinsonswa.org.au
W: www.parkinsonswa.org.au

MAJOR SUPPORTERS:
lotterywest
Government of Western Australia
Department of Health
Zrinski Family