

Brain-e-News

RESOURCES

MOSS REHABILTATION RESEARCH INSTITUTE www.mrrl.org

MOSSREHAB RESOURCE NET www.mossresourcenet.org

THE CENTER FOR OUTCOME MEASUREMENT IN BRAIN INJURY www.tblms.org/combl

BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA WWW.BIAUSA.ORG

BRAIN INJURY RESOURCE LINE 1-800-444-6443

BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA www.blapa.org 1-866-635-7097

BRAIN INJURY ALLIANCE OF NEW JERSEY www.blanj.org 1-732-745-0200 FAMILY HELPLINE 1-800-669-4323

BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF DELAWARE www.blausa.org/Delaware/bla.htm 1-800-411-0505

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH BRAIN INJURY HELPLINE 1-866-412-4755 TTY 1-877-232-7640

MODEL SYSTEM KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION CENTER (MSKTC) www.msktc.org

www.Brainline.org

The MEMRI-D-TBI Study: Hope for Severe Memory Impairments Due to Traumatic Brain Injury

The Moss Traumatic Brain Injury Model System (TBIMS) is proud to be involved in a new treatment study just getting underway with funding from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR). Every 5 years, NIDRR follows up the TBIMS competition with an additional funding competition for multi-center projects to test new treatments for people with TBI. Moss is a partner in the new trial that won this award, entitled *Multicenter Evaluation of Memory Remediation after TBI with Donepezil: The MEMRI-TBI-D Study.* The project is led by The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research in Houston, Texas, with David Arciniegas, MD as Principal Investigator (PI). For the Moss TBIMS, Tessa Hart, PhD is the Site PI and John Whyte, MD, PhD is Co-PI.

Memory deficits are among the most common and important consequences of traumatic brain injury (TBI). People with TBI often complain of forgetting conversations, important tasks they want to accomplish, and plans and routines from day to day. Some research shows that persistent memory deficits are associated with reduced levels of acetylcholine, which is a naturally occurring brain chemical (neurotransmitter) that helps brain cells communicate with one another. The MEMRI-TBI-D Study will test whether taking donepezil (Aricept), a medication that boosts acetylcholine in the brain, will lead to im-

proved memory in people who are between 6 and 36 months after TBI and still have significant problems with everyday memory.

Participants in this trial will be randomly assigned to receive donepezil or a placebo (an inert pill) for 10 weeks. At the beginning, the end, and several points within this time period, participants will undergo memory testing. Caregivers, also, will be asked to report on how the person is doing at home. No one will know until the end of the study who has gotten donepezil and who has gotten placebo. This "double-



blind, placebo-controlled" study is considered the best way to prove the effectiveness of a drug for a specific problem such as impaired memory.

We are very excited to be part of this study and hope that the results will help to provide treatment guidance for people with TBI who have persistent memory problems. Watch this space for updates as we gather more information!



What kind of rehabilitation do patients with disorders of consciousness deserve?



Traumatic brain injury (TBI) frequently begins with coma. Although most patients regain consciousness within hours or days of injury, those with the most severe injuries may remain unconscious, or marginally conscious (referred to as the vegetative state and minimally conscious state, respectively) for long periods. The view among most health insurers has been that patients with disorders of consciousness (DOC) are not appropriate for intensive inpatient rehabilitation because they can't actively participate in rehabilitation activities. The result of this policy is that many patients with DOC are transferred directly from an acute care hospital to a nursing home or to their family's home, without ever being evaluated by an expert in brain injury rehabilitation. The policy not only limits expert care

but also limits research that might eventually help people with DOC, since research depends on people with a given disorder being admitted to an academic medical center as opposed to a nursing home.

Despite these obstacles, research conducted in the last decade has suggested that recovery of patients with DOC resulting from trauma is better than most people appreciate. Most patients with DOC who do gain access to rehabilitation regain consciousness while they are there, and about one-fifth of them are eventually able to live independently and to work. Yet this research also shows that patients with DOC are medically complex and need careful, expert management to resolve the medical obstacles to recovery.

Dr. Whyte and his colleague, Dr. Risa Nakase-Richardson, co-chair the Disorders of Consciousness Special Interest Group of the TBI Model System. In that capacity, they organized a special collection of research articles focusing on DOC, which appeared in the October, 2013 issue of the Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. These articles, authored by scientists from the US and Europe, present evidence for the amount of recovery possible with DOC, the medical obstacles that must be overcome, and innovative models of care. Isn't it time, now, to give these severely injured patients access to high quality rehabilitation?

Faces of the TBI Model System: Gillian Murray

Gillian Murray, MSW is a Clinical Case Manager for the Drucker Brain Injury Center's Community Re-Entry Program at the Tabor Road campus. She is also a Research Therapist for the NIH-funded clinical trial on anger management after TBI led by Dr. Hart. Gillian's training is in Clinical Social Work and she is currently a graduate student pursuing a doctoral degree in her field. She enjoys her dual role as clinician and research therapist and finds that each enhances the other. "My clinical background is very useful in my work as a research therapist, and bringing my research experience to my clinical practice has helped me to become a better clinician," she noted. Gillian has many interests in her life outside of work. She is an accomplished musician who plays multiple instruments, writes music, and performs locally with two groups. She also throws pottery and is one of the founders and officers of the Southern New Jersey Chapter of the Daughters of the British Empire, a group with great personal meaning to her as she was raised in England and enjoys the connection with her British roots.



Save the Date—November 8th! New Roads, New Directions: Finding Your Way After Brain Injury



Every 5 years the Moss TBIMS conducts a conference for people with brain injury and their families, joined by other rehabilitation facilities in the greater Philadelphia region and southern New Jersey. The Moss TBIMS Advisory Council has been hard at work creating our 4th such conference, entitled *New Roads, New Directions*, slated for **Saturday, November 8, 2014** at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in downtown Philadelphia. All are invited to attend! The program will include lectures and workshops, information booths, discussion sessions, hands-on demonstrations, and plenty of networking opportunities. Our keynote speaker, Doug Markgraf, is a survivor of brain injury and subject of the documentary "This Beats a Coma." Doug will share insights, strategies and inspiration for the journey through life. Watch for the full program to appear at www.mossrehabconference.com in early September.

BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Building Foundations for Success— Resilience in the face of challenge

- June 15-17th at the Lancaster Marriott Center
- Keynote speakers: Kevin Pearce, Jennifer Fields and Julia Fox Garrison
- For info: www.biapa.org/ annual_conference

BRAIN INJURY ALLIANCE OF NEW JERSEY

ANNUAL SEMINAR

Mapping the Way after Brain Injury

- May 15th & 16th at the Sheraton Eatontown Hotel
- Keynote speakers: Dr. Tessa Hart and Jennifer Fields
- For info: http://bianj.org/annualseminar

EMPOWERMENT & SUPPORT GROUP INFORMATION



PENNSYLVANIA EMPOWERMENT GROUP

The Elkins Park Brain Injury Empowerment Group meets on the second Monday of each month from 5-6:30 at 60 Township Line Road, Elkins Park, PA 19027. For more info, contact Debbi Eisen at 215-663-6857 or Katie Soreth-Harman at 215-663-6757.

NEW JERSEY SUPPORT GROUP

The New Jersey Brain Injury Support Group meets on the Fourth Tuesday of most months from 3:00-4:00 at 135 S. Broad Street, Woodbury NJ 08096. For more info, contact Dayna Scott at 856-853-9900, ext. 102.



MossRehab at Elkins Park 50 E. Township Line Road Elkins Park, PA 19027 ATTN: Kelly Bognar

The Moss TBI Model System

The National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research has designated MossRehab as a Model System of Care for traumatic brain injury since 1997. The TBI Model System program seeks to improve lives by creating and disseminating new knowledge about the course, treatment and outcomes of TBI.

The Traumatic Brain Injury Model System (TBIMS) Centers for the current funding cycle (2012-2017)

