

MEDIA RELEASE

Current Trends In Movement Disorders

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The term 'movement disorders' refers to a group of neurological (nervous system) conditions that cause abnormal voluntary or involuntary movements, or slow, reduced movements. Some of the more commonly known movement disorders include the neurological conditions of Parkinson's, Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and Motor Neuron Disease (MND) all of which are progressive disorders affecting motor functions. There is believed to be a genetic link in a small percentage of all of these conditions. Some common symptoms of these conditions include weakness, impaired balance, swallowing issues, fatigue, depression and social isolation. The rate and progression of symptoms in each condition is highly individualised and the impact they have is experienced by those diagnosed, their partners, carers, parents, children, extended family, friends and co-workers. To date there is no known cure for Parkinson's, MS or MND. Treatment is aimed at maximising independence and quality of life.

Being rurally isolated and only having one visiting neurologist often means members of the Sunraysia community who are living with these conditions have little available to them in the way of resources and information. With this in mind Sunraysia Community Health Services (SCHS) in conjunction with the Murray Primary Health Network (PHN) are pleased to present a free public seminar on 'Current Trends in Movement Disorders', on Wednesday June 1st at 1.00pm at SCHS located on the corner of Deakin Avenue and Thirteenth Street. The seminar will focus on MS, Parkinson's and Motor Neurone Disease and is open to people who are living with MS, Parkinson's and Motor Neurone disease or any other neurological condition as well as their family, friends, carers and health professionals. The day time seminar will be followed with an evening session for general practitioners aimed at increasing their awareness of new findings along with resource to assist in early diagnosis and long term management for people with these conditions.

MS is a condition of the central nervous system, interfering with nerve impulses within the brain, spinal cord and optic nerves. It affects over 23,000 people with diagnosed often occurring between the ages of 20-40 years. It is more common in females with three times more females than males being diagnosed with the condition. Dr Phu D. Hoang will present a session aimed at addressing walking impairments in people with MS. Dr Hoang, PhD is a senior physiotherapist at the MS Association with a post- doctoral fellowship in neuroscience research. He is a well published author with an established research history focused on improving mobility and reducing falls in people with MS. Dr Hoang has also developed and applied a method of measuring passive muscle properties and the effects of these interventions on people with MS as well as stroke survivors.



Parkinson's disease (PD) is the second most common neurodegenerative disorder; second only to Alzheimer's. There are currently 83,000 people in Australia effected by PD with Mildura having one of the highest incidence of PD in the state. The average age of diagnosis is 55-65 years with 1 in 5 people diagnosed under the age of 50. There are thirty two Australians diagnosed with PD every day. Guest speakers for Parkinson's include Victor McConvey who is a Parkinson's Nurse Consultant. Victor will give an overview of Parkinson's and discuss some frequently and not so frequently asked questions. Victor has been a Nurse for 28 years and has worked in the area of neurology for the past 20 years. He has worked in clinical management and service development positions in both Australia and the United Kingdom, including establishing the Parkinson's Nurse Specialist position in Leeds (UK). Victor is currently employed as the Clinical Nurse Consultant at Parkinson's Victoria. He has written journal articles, presented at international conferences and received a number of awards and fellowship related to his work with the Parkinson's community. Sheree Ambrosini is a Movement Disorder Nurse working closely with members of her community with Parkinson's. She has a Graduate Diploma in Neuroscience, a Masters in Gerontology and is currently studying to achieve her nurse practitioner accreditation. Sheree has a vast experience working with neurological clients and has presented at conferences both nationally and internationally. She will discuss the success of the movement disorder program that she facilitates in conjunction with Dr Arup Bhattacharya- divisional clinical director of Medicine at Goulburn Valley Health.

Motor Neuron Disease (MND) is the name given to a group of diseases in which the nerve cells (neurones) controlling the muscles that enable us to move, speak, breathe and swallow undergo degeneration and die. MND can affect a person's ability to walk, speak, swallow and breathe with 50% of people experiencing changes in cognition, language, behaviour and personality. MND is known as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) in many parts of the world and recognised by the 'ice bucket challenge'. Every day in Australia two people are diagnosed with MND and two people pass away due to MND. In Australia there are currently 1900 people living with MND. Symptoms usually commence between the ages of 50-60 years and the average life expectance after diagnosis is 27 months; with ten percent of people with MND live for more than 10 years. David Kerlely is an information and resource co-ordinator at MND who will present on current research aimed at reducing the delay between symptom onset and diagnosis of MND as well as treatment options and available resources.

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