

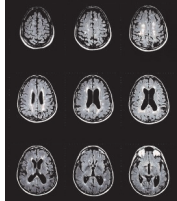


**HIGHLIGHTS
FROM IMSMP'S
2011 PATIENT
SYMPOSIUM**

ISSUE 1 | VOLUME 3 | WINTER 2011



**WHAT'S HAPPENING
IN OUR LABORATORY
RIGHT NOW**



**A FIRST LOOK AT
YOUR NEW MRI
SUITE**

Healing MS

**IMSMP'S NEW NEWSLETTER,
ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF
OUR PATIENTS AND KEEPING
YOU INFORMED OF THE LATEST
RESEARCH, TREATMENT AND WAYS TO HEAL.**

Stem Cell Trial Approved!

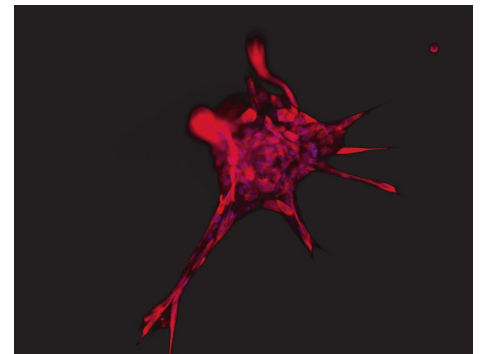
"We are the first Multiple Sclerosis Center in the world to be using neural progenitor cells to attempt to repair the damage from MS."

Dr. Saud A. Sadiq

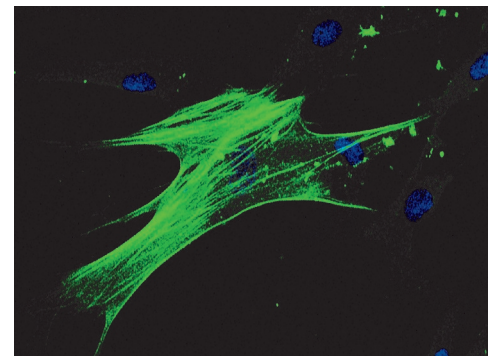
After approximately ten years of research, the Multiple Sclerosis Research Center of New York has received approval to begin a trial using adult, autologous brain-like stem cells. These are cells taken from the bone marrow of our patients and grown in our laboratory to become mesenchymal stem cell-derived neural progenitor cells. MSRCNY received the approval at the end of November through an institutional review board (IRB), the International Cellular Medicine Society. The main purpose of the IRB is to evaluate

the safety of the therapy. After reviewing the study, ICMS was convinced that the therapy was not going to put patients at undue risk and that the treatment is the practice of medicine. Patients in the study will undergo three rounds of stem cell injections into the cerebral spinal fluid surrounding the spinal cord and be evaluated over a three year period.

Dr. Sadiq hopes this trial will open up new avenues of treatment focused on repair and regeneration that didn't exist before.



Mesenchymal and Neural Progenitor Cells of MS patient, grown and harvested at MSRCNY



Saud A. Sadiq, M.D.
Director

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Merry Davidson, RN
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George DiGiacinto, MD
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Mantu Gupta, MD
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Mary Klein, RN, CNS

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Yadira LaMazza, MSW
Theresa Lee, RN, MSN
Rebecca Lizarraga, NP
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Martha Nkansah, RN
Viola Perez, RN
Gabriel Sara, MD
Evelyn Schroeder, RN, BSN
James Stark, MD
Andrew Sylvester, MD
Pamela Levin, RN, BSN
Shelly White, MSW
Armistead Williams, III, MD
Allan Zapanta

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Stem cell trial info continued - common questions . . .

What does this mean for you, if you are newly diagnosed or do not have disability?

Continue your current treatment. You are not a candidate for the stem cell study. Future studies at the center may relate to you. Follow our research publications.

What does this mean if you are clinically stable but have defined disability?

Inform yourself about the trial. Review updates and information on the website and our newsletter. Bring the subject up for discussion at your next office visit with your physician.

What does this mean if you are disabled and feel you are an immediate candidate for stem cells?

Ask for information from the stem cell research team and decide if you are interested in participating. Register your interest with a team member. Bring the subject up for discussion at your next office visit with your physician. For information call (212)265-8070 and ask to speak with Deirdre or Dan on the stem cell research team.



MSRCNY



Andre Mueller, PhD. discusses his research with guests



Dr. Armistead Williams presents ways to optimize treatment



Patient Profiles panel L to R: Pamela Von Ulrich, Robert Krivitsky, Jed Elamleh

Symposium Wrap-Up

Our 14th annual patient symposium on October 30th was a great success! Despite an unexpected snowstorm, over 400 patients, friends and family came to hear talks centered on the theme of Healing MS. Dr. Joanne Festa, our new head of cognition, explained how cognitive evaluations complete the picture for doctors monitoring MS activity. In addition, she discussed how many factors beside MS can affect cognition and that exercise and leisure activities can improve cognitive function.

Dr Stephen Kanter, head of physical therapy took a chapter from his work with professional football players and discussed "prehabilitation." In "prehab," you make improvements in your own level of function instead of waiting for an injury or setback.

Dr. Saud Sadiq presented the work of our research laboratory and exciting news items. For more information, check our website at www.MSRCNY.org for updates over the coming months.

Pamela Levin, RN lead interviews with three patients with MS who discussed the challenges they met on their path to stability.

Dr. Armistead Williams asserted that "the goalposts have changed" and we should not settle for inadequate disease control but instead use all available markers of MS activity to optimize medical therapy.

Rebecca Lizarraga, NP our new nurse practitioner, held a popular rapid fire question and answer session with Dr.'s James Stark, Deneb Bates, and Andrew Sylvester. They addressed patients' questions on many hot topics including: the optimal diet, CCSVI, Rituxan, and progressive MS. This was a popular session and we will continue to answer common questions on MS at our clinical website www.IMSMP.org.

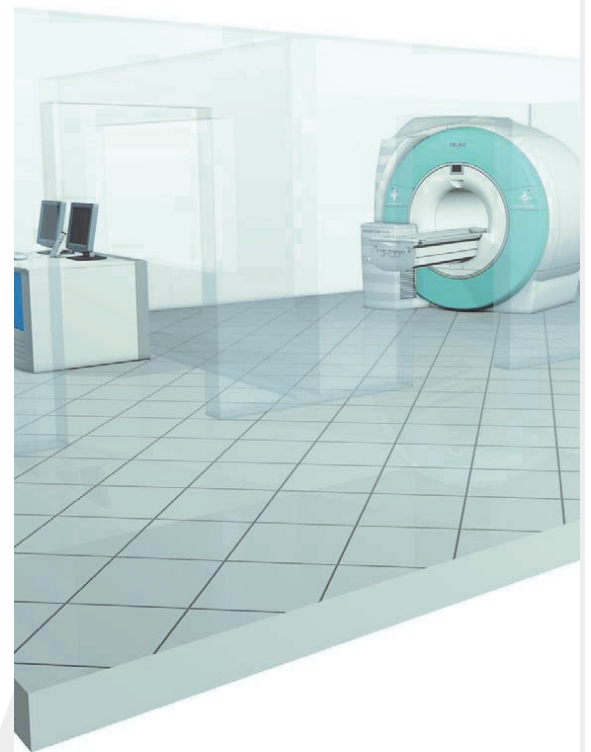
Finally, Dr. Sadiq discussed Healing in a talk spanning two important aspects: the need for spirituality for individual healing and the duty of scientists to bring change for those who suffer. He presented exciting findings in our lab that suggest we could be close to finding the cause of MS. We want to thank everyone for coming!

Event and staff photographs
courtesy of Edward Brydon, PhD.

We're Building The Doors To Your New MRI Suite!

Appointments are now being made for your next MRI to be scheduled and performed the same day as your office visit! We are excited to announce the arrival and installation of 2 new MRI scanners from Siemens. Your physicians at IMSMP can now offer some of the most advanced MR imaging services. The new machines offer excellent image quality, superb diagnostic capabilities, and exceptional patient comfort. With one foot of spacious headroom patients won't feel like they are nose to nose with the top of the magnet. This allows our patients to arrive at IMSMP in the morning, have their scheduled MRI performed and then head upstairs to their office visit. Your doctor will be able to

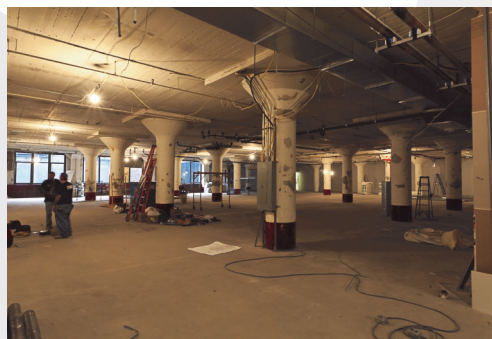
immediately read and review your MRI. As its own unique entity, the MRI facility will accept insurance. We are pleased to announce Claudia Almodovar, RN will be the MRI Suite Manager. Claudia has been at IMSMP since January 2007 and was most recently Assistant Nurse Manager. Claudia brings her management skills and professionalism to this new role. She is also a familiar face to our patients as they enter the new MRI Suite. Located at 521 West 57th Street on the 3rd floor, we are proud to offer our patients the convenience of an MRI Suite in the same building as your doctor's office. Please speak to an MRI representative with any questions.



3rd Floor Construction: We're building better care.



Claudia Almodovar, RN



Your New IMSMP Newsletter: HEALING MS

IMSMP is excited to launch this first issue of our new newsletter: HEALING MS. The new year to come is filled with renovations, new treatments and exciting research in our laboratory. We feel this is a perfect opportunity for a new look to our newsletter and a way to bring you the latest information and updates happening at your center. We chose Healing MS as our title for its unique meaning to various individuals. Healing represents something different to all our patients, but most importantly promotes well-being of the mind, body and soul. We welcome any feedback or suggestions you have on our new publication! We would also like to thank Beth DiBiase, for her dedication, hard work and heart that went into all our previous newsletters. Many other MS Centers started newsletters of their own after discovering what Beth had created. To forward info or suggestions on the newsletter, please contact us at: newsletter@imsmp.org

Rainbow of Hope, Path to Progress Gala 2011 at Chelsea Piers

Annual Benefit for MS Research a Huge Success

On October 12, 2011, a festive group of over 400 patients, family members and friends gathered at Pier Sixty to raise a significant sum of money for the Center's research initiatives, and to have a lot of fun doing it. For the second consecutive year, Kammi and Brad Reiss co-chaired the Rainbow of Hope/Path to Progress Benefit that resulted in raising an astounding \$1.7 million, setting a record for this annual fundraiser.

The weather cooperated and the spacious setting on the Hudson River allowed guests to enjoy a cocktail hour followed by a dinner program featuring a comical welcome by the Master of Ceremonies, former *Saturday Night Live* cast member Colin Quinn.

Dr. Sadiq then provided a brief overview of the great progress made by MSRCNY's research team over the last year towards finding the cause of MS.

A very lively auction, presented by Paul Zekos, kept the audience engaged and entertained and the one-of-a-kind and opportunity-of-a-lifetime auction prizes fetched many high bids. Inspired by the contagious generosity in the room, some of the items were offered a second and third time, doubling and tripling the auction revenue. The auction culminated with Mr. Zekos raising over \$353,000 for a Luminex machine which is used to discover and analyze biomarkers in MS patients to shorten the time required to determine if a treatment is successful.

The auction raised a staggering \$704,000, \$220,000 more than 2010.

Another event highlight was a performance by the Sugar Hill Gang, known for introducing rap music to a mainstream audience in the 70s with their hit "Rapper's Delight". As they started their set, the ballroom immediately transformed into a disco and the dance floor and stage filled with guests dancing and singing to the familiar tunes.

Dr. Sadiq and his research team are encouraged by the generous support that was demonstrated at this event and deeply appreciate all the hard work put forth by Kammi and Brad Reiss, who, remarkably, outperformed their accomplishments of the year before. To acknowledge their unsurpassed generosity, passion, and leadership, Dr. Sadiq presented them with the first Path to Progress Award during the dinner program.

We extend our deepest thanks to the Board of Directors, benefit committee, event sponsors, and donors who played an instrumental role in the event's success. Their dedication to the Center's mission sustains us as we continue on our Path to Progress in finding the cause of and eventual cure for MS.



MSRCNY Development Department News

This past fall, **Kimberly Woodward** joined MSRCNY's Development team as Development Manager, just in time to provide much needed organizational skills to the Rainbow of Hope annual benefit. The department has been restructured in conjunction with the Center's fundraising priorities, and Kimberly will manage department operations and develop a pipeline for grant support. She has been a successful fundraiser in previous positions at non-profit organizations including the Hudson River Museum and Connecticut Opera, and has significant experience in special events, annual giving, and grant writing.

Salini Vasireddy, part of the IMSMP staff for nearly two years before taking on her role as Development Assistant last spring, has enrolled in full-time classes at NY Methodist Allied Sciences College to pursue studies in diagnostic medical sonography – echocardiogram. MSRCNY wishes her great success as she takes on a new career path.

If you are interested in making a gift to MSRCNY to help sustain the promising research initiatives underway, please donate online at www.msrcny.org or call the Development office at: 646-557-3861



Board Members Lee Seidler (Chair), Greta Rubin Schwartz; Richard Schwartz



Dr. Saud Sadiq presents event co-chairs and Board members Kammi and Brad Reiss with the Path to Progress Award



Master of Ceremonies Colin Quinn with Dr. Saud Sadiq



Board Member Roger Coleman bidding for research!

Rainbow of Hope eJournal ads can be viewed online at www.rainbowgala.com

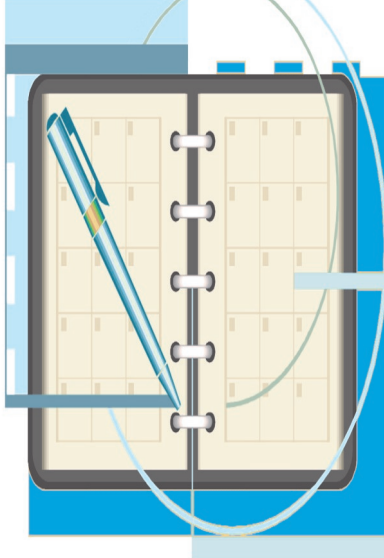
New Roles and New Faces. An Update on Your Nursing Staff . . .



Dorothy Kurdyla, RN

- As we head into a new season we would like to welcome a new nurse to our nursing staff. Dorothy Kurdyla recently graduated Rush University's Generalist Entry Master's program. Prior to nursing school, Dorothy worked at a biotech company called Amyris Biotechnologies and Lawrence Livermore National Lab in CA.
- We would like to welcome Alison Galiley back from maternity leave and into her role as Nurse Manager. Thank you to Evelyn Schroeder for her efforts as Acting Nurse Manager while Alison was on leave.
- We are pleased to announce Rebecca Lizarraga is a Nurse Practitioner. Rebecca graduated from Hunter College in New York and will be staying on at IMSMP in a Nurse practitioner role. Rebecca will focus on primary care and see patients here at the center.
- Congratulations to Theresa Lee, Claudia Almodovar and Pamela Levin! Theresa has been promoted to Assistant Nurse Manager. Theresa will provide support to Alison and brings great experience to the position. She replaces Claudia Almodovar in that role. Claudia will be assuming the position of Manager of our highly anticipated MRI Suite. She will oversee daily operations, the MRI staff and patient care. Pam will be transitioning into a Marketing/Public Relations role for the center to bring about more awareness of our mission and who we are.
- Jamie Weinstein and Viola Perez have completed their training! They will work side by side with Dorothy in assisting our patients during procedures as well as with phone calls and prescription needs. Tamara Gilbert continues in her nursing role and assumes Research Nurse responsibilities as well.

Mark Your Calendar



**Good Luck to everyone in continuing to provide
unparalleled nursing care as a team!**

Appointments with your physician at IMSMP can be given out up to a year in advance. It's important to always ask our secretaries for an appointment card AND mark in your personal calendar when your next visit will take place. Your appointment will be confirmed by our concierge the week it is to happen but if you ever misplace your card or want a reminder, feel free to call the front desk at 212-265-8070.

One Call Center Reminder

The International Multiple Sclerosis Management Practice would like to remind patients we are your "One Call Center." What does this mean for you? Patients only need to make One Call to our MS center when a question or concern arises. The Nursing Phone Line and Social Work Department are structured to ensure that every call gets returned the same day. However, we need your cooperation to make this happen. **Multiple calls to the center regarding the same issue are time consuming and inefficient for both the nurse or social worker and the patient.** Additional calls tie up the phone lines and actually can prevent a staff member from returning your call in a timely manner. When a nurse or social worker is continuously playing messages regarding the same issue, it slows the process of her speaking to your MD. As a One Call Center, patients can rest assured they will receive a phone call back without having to reach out multiple times. If you are calling regarding a time sensitive issue, please state that in your message or when speaking to a nurse or secretary.

Social Work Section

Health Insurance Update

The social work department counsels families with MS about their health insurance options. The recent passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) has made the following changes to health insurance: Every state in the U.S. now protects people with pre-existing conditions by offering an insurance plan without pre-existing condition exclusions to people who have been uninsured for at least six months. These are available for purchase. Young adults may be covered under their parents' *private* health insurance policy until age 26. People with Medicare Part D prescription drug plans will now receive a 50% discount off brand name drugs while in the coverage gap (donut hole). The savings will increase over the next few years. Employers will begin offering long term care insurance to all employees, regardless of pre-existing conditions beginning in October 2012. This is a great improvement for working people with MS, who currently find it almost impossible to purchase long term care insurance, and will be covered more in upcoming newsletters.

The information above was gleaned from the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation website <http://www.kff.org/healthreform/basics.cfm> which is a good resource for those who want more information about the PPACA. For more information about these, or other health insurance issues, please call the Social Work Department at 212-265-8070.



From left to right: Sharmilee Roy, Tammy Jordan, Paula Shields, Giacomina Ruggiero, Margaret Calarco, Erica Peskin, Jill Hughes, Marie Hughes-Rios, Carmen Gonzalez, Aishath Shiuna



Coping with MS can be less difficult when you are not alone. The social work department offers support groups for people with MS as well as spouses/partners of people with MS. Our groups are formed around commonalities, including similar types and stages of MS, because sharing experiences with someone who can relate to your situation can be particularly helpful.

The following groups continue to meet at the IMSMP, and are often open to new members:

- **Women's Coping and Connection Group**
- **Professional Men's Group**
- **Spouses/Partners Group**

Our groups are formed based on requests from our patients. In response to recent need, the following groups will soon begin meeting:

- **Men's Coping and Connection Group**
- **Newly Diagnosed group for people diagnosed within the last 3 years**
- **Professional Women's Group (beginning March 2012)**

If you are interested in joining one of our six groups, please contact Beth DiBiase, LCSW at 212-265-8070.

From Your Front Staff

Reminder: As of January 1, 2012 patients will be responsible to pay their yearly deductibles and coinsurance associated with their insurance plans.

Messages: The secretarial staff is requesting that when patients receive a message or see a missed call from the office, please listen to the entire message to determine which member of the staff is awaiting a return call. When a patient calls back without listening to the entire message they are sometimes not aware of who has called them. The front staff regretfully has to put patients on-hold as they ask around to see who has left the message.

Welcome: We would like to welcome our new secretary Alison Aird. Alison graduated Manhattanville College in 2007 with a degree in history and is currently attaining her second bachelors degree in Archaeology. She previously worked at Alpha Health Associates in Livingston, NJ.

It's A Boy!

Congratulations to Social Worker, Yadira La-Mazza who gave birth to Ryan Christopher on Sunday, November 6th, 2011 and Marie Hughes-Rios from our Front Staff who gave birth to Marcus William on Thursday, October 6th, 2011. Everyone is happy and healthy!



Clinical Research Review

The Clinical Research Team has been busy with several exciting projects. We have the following updates for some of our new and ongoing studies:

Introducing the DECIDE Study: We are currently in the early stages of initiating the DECIDE Study with Biogen Idec and PRA International. This study is investigating the safety and efficacy of the drug Daclizumab compared with Avonex in patients with Relapsing-Remitting MS. Patients selected for the study will be randomly assigned to either the Daclizumab treatment group or the Avonex treatment group. Patients and doctors will be blinded to which drugs patients are receiving during the study. We hope to begin enrolling patients in this study sometime during December.

Update on the STRATIFY-2 Study: As many of you already know, the MSRCNY is currently participating in the STRATIFY-2 Study with Biogen Idec. The study tests for the presence of antibodies to the JC virus in patients on Tysabri via a simple blood draw. A result of “Not Detected” means a patient lacks the antibodies to the virus, implying that they also lack the virus, while the result “Detected” means the opposite. The virus is usually an asymptomatic infection in about 54% of the population, but it plays a role in the development of PML, a rare brain infection which can have severe consequences. Tysabri has been associated with an increased risk of PML, so the study is investigating whether the rates of PML in patients on Tysabri are lower for patients lacking the JC virus antibodies versus those that have the viral antibodies. Once enrolled in the study, patients receive three blood draws over the course of two years (baseline/month 0, month 12, and month 24). The STRATIFY-2 Study closed enrollment on October 31st, 2011. However, study activities (month 12 and month 24 blood draws) continue for patients who were enrolled by this deadline.

Update on the RENEW Follow-up Study: The MSRCNY has largely completed work on the RENEW Follow-up Study with EMD Serono, Registrat-Mapi, and MediciGlobal. The study was a follow-up with patients who received Mitoxantrone in the past to further evaluate the drug. We'd like to thank all who participated in this study for their time and assistance.

Update on the Hypnosis Study: We are still actively recruiting for a study on the use of hypnosis to treat anxiety and side-effects associated with injection of MS medications and/or general pain. This project is a collaborative study with a licensed clinical social worker at the NYU Silver School of Social Work.

If you are interested in any of our clinical research studies and would like to learn more, please contact our Clinical Research Assistant, Deirdre Dulak, at 646-557-3860.

Laboratory Research



Boxun Xie, MS



Please welcome Staff Associate **Boxun Xie, MS** to add to our research staff. He received his MS from the Department of Histology from Shanghai First Medical College in China. He will be working closely with our senior research scientists and research assistants to aid them with pathology.

Congratulations! Andre Mueller, PhD recently received a grant from the **National Multiple Sclerosis Society**. The grant is to study the **secretory leukocyte protease inhibitor (SLPI)**. The long-term aims are to establish SLPI's role on repair processes and to target its activity for the development of MS therapy that is able to promote lesion repair in MS.

Congratulations! We are excited to announce that we published a paper in the **Journal of Neurological Sciences, in Press** titled **"Clinical and Pathological Effects of Intrathecal Injection of Mesenchymal Stem Cell-Derived Neural Progenitors in an Experimental Model of Multiple Sclerosis"**. The authors of this paper are: Harris, VK, Yan, QJ, Vyshkina, T, Sahabi, S, Liu, X, and Sadiq, SA.

Spotlight on Dr. Massimiliano Cristofanilli, PhD

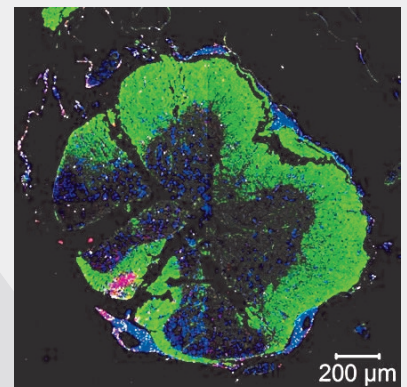
Dr. Cristofanilli joined the MSRCNY in 2008, where he developed the combinatorial use of embryonic and adult stem cells as a therapy in MS. In particular, Dr. Cristofanilli's team showed that the survival and myelinating abilities of embryonic-derived stem cells injected in an animal model of MS, can be increased by adjunctive treatment with adult stem cells instead of conventional immunosuppressants. This work resulted in a manuscript published this March in the journal "Stem Cells and Development". In addition, Dr. Cristofanilli has been developing in vitro and in vivo models of progressive MS to better understand mechanisms of disease progression, regeneration failure, and to screen for potential therapeutic agents.



Massimiliano Cristofanilli, PhD

The biological basis of progressive MS, both secondary and primary, is poorly understood pathologically and is generally treatment unresponsive. It is a difficult problem to investigate because the widely used animal model of MS, experimental allergic encephalomyelitis, is not representative of progressive MS. Moreover, brain and spinal cord specimens from patients with progressive MS are not easily obtained and post-mortem lesion pathology does not represent the dynamic biological events pertaining to ongoing disease pathogenesis. In this scenario, investigation of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) obtained from progressive MS is likely to yield important and new insights into the mechanisms of progressive disease. In Dr. Cristofanilli's hypothesis, the agent(s) responsible for the loss of myelin and progressive neurodegeneration characteristic of progressive forms of MS is present in patients' CSF and is capable of replicating the disease's pathophysiological phenotype in cell culture and in mice. Dr. Cristofanilli received his PhD in Neuroscience from University of Rome "La Sapienza", in a joint

program with SUNY Down State Medical Center (NY). Prior to joining the Center, he was a research associate in the Keck Center for Collaborative Neuroscience at Rutgers University(NJ) from 2006-2008, where he studied stem cell-based therapy to promote regeneration in patients affected by spinal cord injury. He also received postdoctoral training in the field of molecular neuroscience at NYU School of Medicine from 2005-2006 and at SUNY Down State Medical Center (NY) from 2003-2005.



Experimentally induced demyelinated lesion in mouse spinal cord



Physical Therapy: How To Reach Your Goals

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR PHYSICAL WELLBEING: PRE-HABILITATE

The concept of pre-habilitation was presented at the recent MSRCNY Patient Education Symposium by clinicians in multiple departments at the IMSMP. Pre-habilitation is a process of proactively participating in a wellness or fitness program before rehabilitative measures are needed. As the weather becomes colder and daylight hours lessen in the winter months, it is important to consider the adjustments to be made to a daily activity routine which may have included days outside and various outdoor endeavors. In many cases, endurance and overall functional strength may be decreased in the winter months simply from the decreased amount of physical activity. Start considering what you want to be able to do in the Spring and Summer 2012 and start working toward this now with your physical therapist or other wellness professional.

COMMUNICATE YOUR REHABILITATION GOALS

Recently, there have been many cases where patients who have received physical therapy services for long periods of time are being discharged, even when patients' feel improvements are being made. The reason for this, in part, is original rehabilitation goals documented by the rehabilitation professional (PT, OT, or SLP) either have been met or there is not enough progress being made to reach those goals. In either case, you and your rehabilitation provider should regularly discuss and update your goals. In nearly all cases, rehabilitation goals must be linked to a specific functional activity, especially for persons with multiple sclerosis. It is generally not acceptable for a goal to be "increase strength" or "decrease fatigue". Instead, the goal to increase strength should be linked with an activity such as being able to walk up stairs.

YOUR THERAPY PROGRAM MUST BE MORE THAN WHAT IS DONE AT THE CLINIC

Anyone receiving services from a rehabilitation professional (PT, OT, or SLP) must have a home activity program which is to be done every day. This program usually includes some type of stretching and strengthening activities which can be done at home, at work, during commutes, and even while on vacation. These activities or exercises need not be strenuous and time consuming which is why they should be done every day. For many patients who are able and motivated to do more on their own, the rehabilitation professional can provide additional exercises to be done 3-5 days per week specific to your goals. By performing the home activity program daily, it should allow your time with the PT or OT to be focused on skilled interventions like transfer training or assistive device instruction which is not able to be done elsewhere.

*Happy and Healthy New Year from All of US
at IMSMP & MSRCNY*

Meet the IMSMP Chief Operating Officer

"My goal is to create a work environment employees are proud of, Dr. Sadiq values and is a center of excellence for our patients." -Jennifer Norman



Jennifer Norman

Jennifer Norman began her career at MSRCNY in January of 2009 coming in as our Controller. She has an extensive background in accounting and non-profit management working most recently at the National Hemophilia Foundation where she was also the Controller. Jennifer obtained her MBA from Averett University in Virginia. As an associate member of the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners she has helped the center to implement several policies and controls to ensure that our audits and financial tasks run as smoothly as possible. Additionally she has been a key member of the center's MRI team and provides guidance to all of the staff while juggling tasks ranging from financial reporting and compliance to HR functions. In March of this year Jennifer was promoted to Chief Operating Officer of the MSRCNY and continues to retain the admiration and respect of the entire center. Congratulations on your new position!

News on Naturopathy

Commonly Used Spices Contain Neuroprotective Compounds

Inflammation and oxidative damage are key factors responsible for the development of neurodegenerative diseases, including Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and Multiple Sclerosis. These diseases are not currently curable. However, new research is revealing that molecules derived from common kitchen spices (and foods), such as turmeric and cinnamon, can target specific inflammatory and oxidative pathways, offering potentially novel approaches for preventing the progression of these diseases.



These observations are not necessarily surprising. Since ancient times, spices have been used not only to add flavor and color to foods, but also as preservatives due to their anti-microbial actions, and for treating a range of conditions because of their medicinal properties. In fact, the desire to find new sources, and to control the production and distribution of highly coveted botanical substances has shaped world history. Modern science is now identifying the active compounds in many of these spices and the molecular mechanisms that contribute to their beneficial properties. Specific chemical compounds derived from spices (and foods) can modulate inflammatory pathways, decrease oxidative stress, and prevent neural cell death in the laboratory, suggesting that they can serve as treatments for neurodegenerative diseases.

Chemical compounds currently being studied for their potential benefits in Multiple Sclerosis include curcumin, quercetin, luteolin, and sodium benzoate. Curcumin, from turmeric, the yellow spice used in curry powder, has anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant properties, protects neural cells from toxic agents, and shifts the immune response towards one that is beneficial for MS patients. Quercetin, found in green tea, capers, onions and apples, and luteolin, naturally occurring in celery, thyme, oregano, rosemary, parsley, chamomile and peppermint, are both bioflavonoids that inhibit the activation of mast cells, which are involved in the breakdown of the blood brain barrier and in promoting brain inflammation. Sodium benzoate, a metabolite of cinnamon, also has immunomodulatory and neuroprotective properties and is showing significant benefits in animal models of MS.

While these scientific advances are exciting, clear data regarding the therapeutic value of these compounds in patients has yet to emerge. Nevertheless, millions of people have consumed these natural compounds over thousands of years, suggesting that they are generally safe. Moreover, these observations are a reminder that a plant based diet flavored with spices is the best approach for supporting human health. People with MS may benefit more than the average person from including these foods and spices regularly in their diets, so make it a point to spice up your life!

Family Fundraising

On the Fourth of July, twelve-year-old Julia M., a daughter of a patient, launched her first fundraising initiative for a cause that is near and dear to her: MSRCNY. She set up a stand in front of her house to collect donations totaling \$84 by giving out free water, cookies, and lemonade.



Julia M.



Charlie Mandel

Charlie Mandel (Katie's Grandson 12 years old) ran a 5K on Cape Cod this past summer raising funds for MS research. Melissa Bea (Katie's daughter) ran a half marathon for MS research in March of 2011 here in NY. Both ran to honor Katie. She would like to mention how proud and honored she felt and is grateful for the unfailing support of her family.

MSRCNY is pleased to recognize the generous gift from Harriet Schoenthal by naming Examination Room #8 in her honor. We also thank Beverly and Larry Ceasar for facilitating this gift.

In Memory of
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Katie Mandel and daughter Melissa

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