

Krembil Neuroscience News

March, 2009



This spring has brought about some great recognition for staff and researchers at the Krembil Neuroscience Centre. First off, I would like to congratulate Dr. Chris Wallace, who is the recipient of the 2009 Award for Excellence in Postgraduate Medical Education in the category of Teaching Performance. This University of Toronto award recognizes outstanding contributions of faculty members who teach medical residents and fellows, develop innovative approaches to teaching, and advocate for postgraduate medical trainees. KNC is one of the largest teaching sites for neurosciences and Dr. Wallace exemplifies the innovation and excellence that define our centre. I am also extremely pleased to highlight the Outstanding Outcomes Research Award, which was given to the spinal cord research team at the recent 2009 AANS/CNS section meeting for our paper entitled "Key Predictors of Outcomes in Patients Undergoing Surgical Treatment for Cervical Spondylotic Myelopathy: Analysis of a Prospective Multicenter Study in 285 Patients with 1-Year Follow-up". Congratulations to all!

Michael G. Fehlings, MD, PhD, FRCSC, FACS



Epilepsy Awareness Month

Awareness, Treatment, Research and Support @ the Krembil Neuroscience Centre

The Epilepsy team at Toronto Western Hospital in conjunction with Epilepsy Toronto are putting on a variety of awareness activities to mark Epilepsy Awareness month.

On March 10th the Epilepsy Support Group held an educational display and video presentation in the TWH Lobby for patients, visitors and staff. This year the Epilepsy Support Group is celebrating its 10th anniversary. Since 1999, monthly meetings have been held at TWH for group members to share their experiences, discuss surgery as a form of treatment and learn more about epilepsy from guest speakers.

"As members we learn from each other," said Maricarmen Terry. "There are so many different types of seizures, so even among our group, we are all different."

Under the leadership of Sonia Sarkissian, Clinician-Scientist, the meetings have become a chance for members to share time with those who truly understand the condition.

"Epilepsy has a tremendous impact on the quality of life for our patients, that is why it is so important that they receive support in addition to the medical care they need," said Dr. Sarkissian.

The support group is both supportive and educational in nature. Members also hear from a variety of speakers who deal with all aspects of living with epilepsy, from medication to employment and relationships.

"I wish every month was epilepsy awareness month because there are still too many people who do not understand what epilepsy is and how to recognize the symptoms," said Cindy Smart, who has been part of the group since 1999. "But thankfully we have people like Dr. Sarkissian who are helping get the message out."

The group meets at TWH on the second Tuesday of every month from 5:00pm to 6:30pm.



Epilepsy Support Group



Purple Day at TWH

The Support Group also put on a display at TWH on March 26, 2009 to recognize "Purple Day", a world-wide awareness day for epilepsy. Purple Day was started last year by nine-year-old Cassidy Megan of Nova Scotia, Canada.

Improving Stroke Care

New guidelines outlined in the Canadian Best Practice Recommendations for Stroke Care have increased the timeframe for administering thrombolytic therapy for stroke patients. The time window for beneficial treatment of ischemic stroke with intravenous administration of tPA has been extended from 3 hours to 4.5 hours after onset of stroke symptoms.

As a regional stroke centre, Toronto Western Hospital has started to implement these new guidelines for appropriate patients. The increased timeframe will result in more patients getting access to treatment that can improve health outcomes after a stroke.

Stroke Study

Last month, Dr. Frank Silver and members of the stroke team attended the International Stroke Conference where they presented findings from a new study on diabetic patients who suffer a stroke.

Using data from phase 3 of the Registry of the Canadian Stroke Network (RCSN) between July 1, 2003, and March 31, 2008, the team found that hospitalized diabetic stroke patients who receive sulphonylurea therapy appear to be less likely to die and more likely to have a better outcome than patients who do not receive this type of therapy.

According to Dr. Silver the data is observational at this point, but yielded very significant results. He will continue to further study the neuroprotective effects of sulfonylureas in diabetic patients.

World Glaucoma Day

On March 12th health-care providers and patients marked the second annual World Glaucoma Day to raise awareness about one of the leading causes of blindness around the world. Here at TWH, the Donald K. Johnson Eye Centre hosted an education display in the hospital's atrium. Under the leadership of Drs. Graham Trope and Yvonne Buys, Dr. Ayako Anraku and research associate Tien Wong provided optic nerve assessments and eye pressure tests to help educate staff and visitors about glaucoma. Glaucoma is the second leading cause of blindness in older adults and approximately one half of glaucoma sufferers don't realize they have the disease until there is irreversible damage. There are at least 400,000 people in Canada who knowingly suffer from glaucoma. The DKJ Centre is home to one of the largest glaucoma units in the country and is dedicated to fighting this disease with innovative treatment and leading edge research to one day find a cure.



Globe and Mail highlights Telemedicine at KNC

This month, Dr. Chris Wallace demonstrated the technology behind telemedicine for the Globe and Mail. Toronto Western Hospital was used as an example of an e-health success story in [Andre Picard's column](#) on e-health initiatives.

Through the Ontario telemedicine network video conference system, Dr. Wallace was able to "meet" with a patient in Sudbury. This technology enabled both the physician and patient to interact with each other as well as provided the opportunity to review test results as if they were in the same room.

The Krembil Neuroscience Centre is one of the first programs at UHN to have telemedicine fully integrated into the clinic areas. Having telemedicine available in clinic areas results in a smoother flow of work for the health-care providers involved.

According to Kambria Ernst, a nurse and program coordinator for telemedicine at UHN, "it is very rewarding to see patients who live so far away from UHN still able to get access to our world-class health-care

