



The Parkinsonian

The Quarterly Magazine of Parkinson's New Zealand

September 2009 ♣ Vol: 12, No. 3



KORERO MAI – SPEAK TO ME

PARKINSON'S AWARENESS WEEK 1-7 NOVEMBER

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Parkinson's New Zealand is pleased to announce the upcoming theme for Awareness Week 2009 - 'Korero Mai'. Korero Mai means "speak to me" in Maori, and this is a fitting slogan for the launch of new multilingual material about Parkinson's.

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Receiving a diagnosis of Parkinson's is hard in any language, but imagine if you didn't speak English. Or imagine that you had to explain to a loved one that you had Parkinson's, but they didn't speak English and you only had material in English to offer them. This is why Parkinson's New Zealand is excited about promoting new material in a range of languages this Awareness Week.

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Olá!

This theme gives us a fantastic opportunity to reach out to different community and cultural groups and build new relationships. We hope to attract new members to the Parkinson's New Zealand family, and help those who have previously been unsure about where to get information that is accessible and understandable.

hello

Parkinson's New Zealand divisions and National Office will be holding various events and collections around the country during Awareness Week.

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Your support during Awareness Week is vital, so get involved with whatever your local division is doing and let's reach out to new friends together.

kia ora

hola

mālō ē lelei

NATIONAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Tena Koutou e hoa ma

The three months since the last edition of The Parkinsonian have been a busy time for the Parkinson's New Zealand Board and National Office staff.

Our main focus has been our National Review (see page 11). The information gathered from the five regional meetings has already been extremely valuable. While there are some interesting differences between the regions, clear common themes have emerged. However we need more information to ensure that the Society's resources are used in the best way. Therefore we ask that you and all readers of this magazine fill out a copy of the questionnaire you were sent in the post (or you can fill out a questionnaire on line at www.parkinsons.org.nz). Please also encourage others to do so.

Our Korero Mai Parkinson's Awareness Week theme is based on communicating as widely as possible. It follows on from our Anybody, Any age theme of a few years ago. In 2006 we focused on Any age. This year we focus on Anybody. If we are to be true to our mission of providing information, education and support to people living with, affected by and treating Parkinson's we can't limit our services to only those who live in certain parts of the country or only speak English. The Parkinson's family is a multicultural and multilingual one and we are excited to be able to recognise that this year.

Researchers around the world have spent much time investigating the link between pesticides and the development of Parkinson's. We have reported a number of these such studies in this magazine. Veterans of the Vietnam war who have Parkinson's have been arguing for many years that their exposure to Agent Orange and other chemicals is the cause of their condition. Readers will be interested to know that just before going to print I was informed by the Ministry of Defence that Parkinson's has been added to the presumptive list for Vietnam veterans. According to Veterans Affairs New Zealand:

'The presumptive lists are based on medical and scientific research which indicates that if a veteran of one of the listed theatres of operations is suffering from one of the listed disabilities, it is likely that it was attributable to the veteran's service'

This means that veterans with Parkinson's will automatically be eligible for the War Disablement Pension. I have let the Ministry know that the Society is delighted by this decision.

Naku noa



Deirdre and the team at National Office.

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2009 FIELD OFFICER CONFERENCE



Attendees of the 2009 Field Officer conference

On July 30 and 31, Field Officers from around New Zealand attended a training conference in Wellington. This was an exciting opportunity for them to learn, share and discuss.

The conference is held every year and is part of Parkinson's New Zealand's continuing commitment to education.

The conference speakers included:

Neurologist Dr Barry Snow who gave both an introductory session for new Field Officers, and a presentation on the medical management of Parkinson's.

Dr Daphne Manderson, an expert on grief and loss, led a discussion surrounding grief stages and providing support.

Kevin McCaffrey of Effective Governance held a workshop engaging the Field Officers in planning the future of Parkinson's New Zealand as part of the National Review (see pg 11).

Physiotherapist Jessie Snowden gave a presentation on physiotherapy developments for people with Parkinson's.

Field Officer Jenni Hurn presented a DVD on carers and advocacy.

Dr Nisar Contractor gave a presentation on non-motor symptoms of Parkinson's and discussed his attendance to the World Parkinson's Congress in Dresden, Germany.

There was also plenty of time for group discussions and teamwork, and the feedback from the conference has been very positive.

STUDENTS LAUNCH FILM FOR PARKINSON'S NEW ZEALAND

On June 2 the students of a Massey University Public Relations paper invited Parkinson's New Zealand and friends to the launch of a short film they created.

The film was part of their class project to help promote awareness for a charity, and was made with the help and guidance of Parkinson's New Zealand. It covers many aspects of Parkinson's, and stars our Ambassador Jordan Luck, Dr Barry Snow, Field Officer Jenni Hurn, actress Nicole Whippy (from *Outrageous Fortune*), her father Hugh who has Parkinson's, and members Fran and Tony Allcock and Bruce Ross.

The students worked on the film for several months, researching and filming around the North Island. The feedback from the film has been positive, as although the students were not experts on Parkinson's, many viewers



Jordan chats with members at the film launch

have commented that they did a great job trying to portray the varied symptoms of Parkinson's and why it is an important cause to support.

The film has been available on the video sharing website YouTube and the Parkinson's New Zealand website since June, and currently has nearly 700 views.

At the launch the students spoke to the audience which was composed of members, staff and associates

about their experiences making the film. It was lovely to hear that the students felt working with Parkinson's New Zealand was an experience they would remember forever.

After the film was screened, the launch closed with Jordan Luck performing a moving acoustic song he wrote for his late father who had Parkinson's.

To see the film go to www.parkinsons.org.nz

🔥 New Tests for Parkinson's and Alzheimer's

Two American producers of medical products, Transgenomic Inc and Power3 Medical Products Inc, announced the clinical introduction of new tests for Parkinson's and Alzheimer's at the 2009 American Academy of Neurology meeting in Seattle.

The tests, named NuroPro AD and NuroPro PD help clinicians distinguish patients with Alzheimer's and Parkinson's from patients with other neurological disorders. The tests are a panel of blood serum protein biomarkers evaluated by biostatistical analysis to predict the probability the patient has a neurodegenerative disease. In trials, NuroPro PD was able to discriminate between Parkinson's patients and age-matched participants with a sensitivity of 93% and a specificity of 96%.

If the tests continue to be successful in their transition to clinical use, they may help physicians make earlier diagnoses and begin discussions on treatment options earlier.

Source: <http://www.reuters.com>

🔥 Mice with Parkinson's Reproduce Non-Motor Symptoms

Over the last decade, neurologists have been paying greater attention to non-motor symptoms in Parkinson's, such as digestive and sleep problems, loss of sense of smell and depression.

A recent study reported that mice genetically engineered with Parkinson's, reproduce many of the non-motor symptoms associated with Parkinson's disease seen in humans. The study by scientists at Emory University (US) sheds light on the possible causes of non-motor symptoms.

"These mice are very useful for studying the major non-motor symptoms of Parkinson's because they have them together as a

package," says Dr Gary Miller, professor of environmental and occupational health in the School of Medicine at Emory University.

The mice were engineered to be deficient in VMAT2 (vesicular monoamine transporter 2), a protein that helps to store the brain chemicals which Parkinson's patients gradually lose the ability to produce.

The VMAT2-deficient mice could become research tools in the search for medications to treat non-motor symptoms, Miller says. He notes that this is important because most non-motor symptoms do not respond to Levodopa, the medication most commonly given to people with Parkinson's.

Source: *EurekaAlert*

🔥 Pesticide Exposure Again Linked to Parkinson's

Yet another study has linked pesticide exposure to Parkinson's. The study, published in *Annals of Neurology*, argues that exposure to certain organochloride insecticides can cause Parkinson's.

The French study found that farm workers exposed to pesticides were more likely to develop Parkinson's disease, and because the risk increased with the duration of exposure, the data provides evidence of a link.

However the study did not examine whether lower-levels of exposure from the same or similar pesticides in the home, causes an increased risk in developing Parkinson's.

Source: *The Daily Green*

🔥 Light Therapy May Provide New Treatment

Low level light therapy may hold potential for improving neuronal cell function in people with Parkinson's, according to a new study from the University of Virginia's Health System.

Led by Dr Patricia Trimmer, the in

vitro study showed that a single, brief treatment with a low level near-infrared laser increased the velocity of mitochondrial movement in cells for two hours. Mitochondrial movement is responsible for energy production.

The samples were taken from patients with Parkinson's, and the increased velocity changes were comparable with samples from a Parkinson's-free age matched control group.

"Our findings prove early-stage confirmation that low level light therapy has the potential to improve neuronal function in many patients with Parkinson's and other neurological conditions" says Trimmer.

Source: *NewsPlex*

🔥 Natural Enzyme Helps Fight Inherited Parkinson's

Researchers at the University of Technology Southwestern Medical Center (USA) have found that an enzyme that naturally occurs in the brain, helps destroy the mutated protein which is the most common cause of rare inherited Parkinson's.

Their study, using human cells, provides a focus for further research into combating the development of mutated protein. One of the most famous carriers of the protein is Google co-founder Sergey Brin which *The Parkinsonian* has been tracking through his commitments to fund Parkinson's research.

Dr Matthew Goldberg, senior author of the paper says "There are currently enormous efforts to identify potential therapies based on inhibiting this mutated protein. Our paper is a major advance because we have identified an enzyme that promotes the breakdown."

Source: *Science Daily*

🔥 Hormones May Affect Neurological Disease Risk

New research suggests fluctuating

hormone levels may explain trends in the timing of women's susceptibility to neurological diseases including Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

Significant estrogen level changes occur at various stages of women's lives, including adolescence and menopause. The onset or exacerbation of neurological diseases are most likely to occur at these times, said researchers at the University of Texas Medical Branch.

They found that a number of estrogens acting through their receptors affect the dopamine transporter (DAT). As dopamine is a neurotransmitter in the brain, it plays an important role in the normal functioning of the central nervous system.

"The significance of estrogen-coupled regulation of the DAT... should provide insights into how neurological diseases which involve the DAT are related to developmental, gender and life-stage issues." study author Cheryl Watson said.

Source: Health Day News

Scottish Stem Cell Research Receives Funding for a Parkinson's Focus

Researchers at Edinburgh University have been awarded £380,000 by the Parkinson's Disease Society (UK) to create a special type of stem cell from patients with Parkinson's and their relatives.

It is hoped that cell lines created from families will help researchers find new treatments for Parkinson's.

Eventually it is hoped that research in this area could lead to patients receiving cell transplants. Dr Tilo Kunath is the leader of the study, and has been awarded a senior research fellowship by the Parkinson's Disease Society to aid

him in his stem cell work.

In a UK first, Dr Kunath and colleagues will create induced pluripotent stem cells (iPS cells) from people with Parkinson's to understand why the nerve cells die.

IPS cells are created by taking an adult cell, such as a skin cell, and reprogramming them in the lab to become cells which behave like embryonic stem cells - with the ability to transform into any type of cell, including nerve cells.

The researchers will recruit three people with Parkinson's who have a family history of the disease. A sibling who does not have Parkinson's will also be recruited so the cells can be compared.

"We will be looking at whether they behave differently, for example, if they survive chemical assaults" Dr Kunath said.

Edinburgh will be the first in the UK to use this approach, with other researchers trying to do the same in the US, Australia and Japan.

Source: Scotland on Sunday

Hitting Cell Hot Spot Could Help Fight Parkinson's Progression

The latest work to 'turn off the taps' in the brain and stop a chemical being released in excess amounts which can lead to Parkinson's Disease, was presented at The British Pharmacological Society's Summer Meeting in Edinburgh.

Dr Susan Duty from King's College London presented her latest work aimed at stimulating 'trigger points' to stop the release of a chemical that can kill brain cells.

Duty is aiming to find a way to slow down, stop or, even better, reverse the cell death process that occurs in Parkinson's.

She says one of the contributing factors to nerve cell death is an

excess of the chemical glutamate in the motor control pathways in the brain. An excess of this chemical changes the way these pathways operate and makes movement harder to control.

But more importantly, glutamate is one of the factors considered responsible for the demise of the brain cells.

At the symposium, which was attended by leading UK and international pharmacologists, Dr Duty presented her latest work on ways to stop glutamate being released.

Dr Duty said: "The way we hope to achieve this is by stimulating protein targets on the nerve cell called metabotropic glutamate receptors. Certain types of these receptors, when stimulated, are known to prevent release of glutamate in other brain regions. We, and others, have now taken these ideas into regions relevant to Parkinson's disease in the hope of reversing both the clinical signs and cell death associated with this condition."

Dr Duty and colleagues have recently published findings showing that stimulating certain classes of metabotropic glutamate receptor can reverse symptoms in a preclinical model of Parkinson's disease.

"More recently, we have identified which specific type of receptor is involved," she says. "By targeting specific receptors it is hoped that side-effects will be minimised as fewer targets elsewhere in the brain will be stimulated.

"We also have good evidence now that stimulating these receptors can provide protection to the dopamine-containing nerve cells in preclinical models of Parkinson's disease and that the protected nerve cells function normally and are able to help restore movement control."

Source: Medical News Today

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BRAIN HEALTH



“Our research on the adult human brain has shown that we still retain stem cells throughout life. This was unthinkable in previous decades. We have shown that those cells can multiply to make new replacement brain cells to fight brain diseases. We have also discovered the motorway that these new brain cells travel down to repair the human brain. What is most interesting is that animal studies have shown that exercise and a stimulating environment promotes increased numbers of new brain cells. Therefore this has implications for all of us. The more we stimulate our brains, the more we exercise, the more new brain cells we make and the more it will increase out potential to repair the damaged human brain. In summary, use it or lose it!”

*- Professor Richard Faull, Neuroscientist**

Until recently, the scientific community believed that brain development stopped at adulthood. Research now shows otherwise, and there are three key findings that further promote the importance of brain exercise: New pathways of communication among brain cells can form, areas of the brain that are used intensely

can increase slightly in size, and the brain has the ability to make new cells.

Because Parkinson's is caused by the breakdown of dopamine neurons in the brain, these findings are very relevant. In addition there is now scientific evidence to suggest that certain activities – exercise, nutrition, creativity, and relaxation – may not only be therapeutic for Parkinson's symptoms, but may help to improve the brain.

EXERCISE

It is already well established that exercise can help people with Parkinson's improve and maintain mobility, but now we know it can help the brain. Exercise may help increase the connections between neurons and improve blood flow in the brain. Animal studies show that when mice with Parkinson's symptoms exercise, it helps them to retain and use their dopamine neurons more effectively. Similar research is being done into human responses. Exercise also helps to combat depression by releasing serotonin and other mood-elevating chemicals in the brain.

PARKINSON'S FACT SHEET

- Set a routine and stick to it. Slowly ease into different difficulty levels and set achievable goals.
- Envision the realistic results you are aiming for while exercising.
- Even a simple walk can release natural antidepressants and help you think freely
- Exercise at the time of day that suits you best e.g. in the mornings to help wake up, or in the evenings to help wind down.
- Take up exercise opportunities: climb a few flights of stairs when you feel you can, park your car a bit further away than usual.
- Investigate exercises that will address different Parkinson's symptoms, this can be both a mentally and physically stimulating task.

NUTRITION

As a general rule, good nutrition for the body is good nutrition for the brain. However there are some foods that are especially good for brain health, and some that are not.

- Omega Three oils are found in fish, walnut and flaxseed and helps to improve the function of the membranes around brain cells, helping the brain to function better, improve concentration and lessen depression.
- Research suggests antioxidant vitamins E and C help protect cells in the brain.
- Avoid excessive unhealthy foods. Reducing calories can slow age-related brain changes.
- Enjoy caffeine and alcohol in moderation.

CREATIVITY

Another way you may be able to affect the health of your brain is to challenge and stimulate yourself mentally. Contrary to what you may think, creativity is not restricted to those with artistic genius - it is within reach of all of us. Creativity involves a cognitive brain process which helps develop mental function. It is not limited to the arts - there can be creativity in science, mathematics, any kind of problem solving.

- Try things you don't already know how to do. Study a new language, take up an interest in architecture, sailing or crafts for example. Anything that involves concentration, learning and focus will be good for the brain.

- Memory exercises, such as memorising lists, or playing games like bridge, can be helpful for improving loss of memory and recollection speed.
- Try reading aloud to someone, perhaps a grandchild, regularly as this can help mental development.
- Games like Sudoku, crosswords and chess are all good for challenging yourself and getting creative.

RELAXATION

There is evidence that long-term stress, depression and anxiety can damage the brain, so learning relaxation techniques can be invaluable in helping to maintain brain health and ability.

- Try meditation. It can lower blood pressure and help with concentration, even when you are not actively meditating.
- Exercise. Channelling internal stress into external action can help. This can also help you sleep better, which is important for relaxation and brain health.
- Take time for yourself and concentrate on things you enjoy, getting creative can help this.
- Actively relax by tensing then releasing individual muscle groups.

**Professor Faull is establishing a new Centre for Brain Research at The University of Auckland. This will be a unique partnership between neuroscientists, clinicians and community NGOs, including Parkinson's New Zealand. The Centre will launch in November. See page 10.*

Sources: PDF - Improving Brain Function, Headlines - The Healthy Brain Program



BOOKS FOR CARERS



Parkinson's New Zealand has a large selection of books in our library, and they're not just for people with Parkinson's. Below are some of the books available to all members, especially for carers and family members of people with Parkinson's. If you would like to borrow one of the books, please email info@parkinsons.org.nz or 0800 473 4636.

Take Me Home - Parkinson's, My Father, Myself by Jonathan Taylor



Take me home is the story of a son's struggle for recognition from his father with Parkinson's and dementia, who was being transformed mentally and physically. It is this writer's search to discover his father's strange and largely secret past, before he began to tremble and sometimes mistake his son for Humphrey Bogard, or a giraffe.

Caring for the Parkinson's Patient - A Practical Guide Edited by J. Thomas Hutton and Raye Lynne Dipple



This revised and expanded edition of Caring for the Parkinson's Patient has mined the depths of research and information to provide valuable suggestions for family members and carers of people with Parkinson's. There are 16 chapters written by experts in areas of neurology, diagnostics, treatment research, nursing, speech and communication, physical therapy, psychiatry and support services.

The Complete Carer's Guide by Bridget McCall



Being a carer can be rewarding, but it can also be stressful. This practical guide discusses how to ensure that you have a life of your own while caring, how to make informed decisions and, most importantly, how to access the support and help you need. The topics covered include: understanding what health professionals and social services may offer, financial and employment issues, the emotional, physiological and spiritual impact of caring, finding respite care, young carers, and caring at a distance.

Communicating Caring - A Guide for Health Workers and Caregivers by Richard Bolstad with Margot Hamblett, Te Hata Ohlson and Jan Hardie



Communicating Caring has been designed for use by all those involved in caring relationships. Looking firstly at the basics of communication, the book then discusses caring for others and meeting one's own needs along with others. It covers such topics as problem solving, goal setting, listening skills, assertiveness and conflict resolution in an accessible and easy-to-read style.

GET GOING FOR PARKINSON'S

A note from the new administrator and participant Nuala Dunne.



Nuala Dunne running the 10km marathon for Parkinson's New Zealand

I started work as Office Administrator in May this year, and one of my responsibilities is to take care of the administration of Get Going for Parkinson's, an initiative started and previously run by Jennifer Rainville, Projects Co-ordinator.

One of my hobbies is to get out and run and walk around beautiful Wellington, so I personally feel very at home with the concept of Get Going for Parkinson's. I have proudly worn the red and white singlet several times now and I feel that it is a great way to raise awareness and funds for Parkinson's and Parkinson's New Zealand.

The idea of Get Going is that people who are participating in already existing events, or would like to create their own fundraising initiative, can contact National Office and I will send a pack to them. The packs include: training tips, a poster, a sticker, fundraising tips, information on Parkinson's and Parkinson's New Zealand and a singlet or t-shirt. Anyone interested in doing this can contact me by e-mailing nuala@parkinsons.org.nz or by ringing the office.

I have had a very interesting and inspiring start to my involvement in Get Going. As a result of an idea from Bryn Williams www.wobblywilliams.com who lives in Scotland (and was diagnosed with Parkinson's when he was 37), some people in the Wellington area are teaming up for a fundraiser called "Pirates for Parkinson's". On 20 September - they are going to run or walk, wearing their Parkinson's T shirts / singlets (and some pirate attire!), to raise funds and awareness for Parkinson's. I wrote to Bryn to thank him for his inspiration and I was delighted to receive a prompt reply from him. I was also delighted to hear that Bryn has used FundraiseOnline to contribute to the Wellington group's fundraising efforts. I hope that Val will get some more people involved as I am looking forward to putting together more packs and sending them out to enthusiastic participants!

I am looking forward, when I am out and about Wellington wearing my Parkinson's New Zealand singlet, to meeting other people wearing theirs and together we can raise awareness for Parkinson's!

Why not take up your own Get Going challenge, or be a Pirate for Parkinson's next year? To find out more contact nuala@parkinsons.org.nz

Honours for Peter Snell and John Walker

Athletics great John Walker is New Zealand's first knight under the new royal warrant that restores knighthoods in the Queen's Birthday honours after a nine-year absence.

Dr Peter Snell, who was appointed a Distinguished Companion of the NZ Order of Merit in 2001, officially became "Sir Peter" on July 1 as a result of the National Government's restoring the titles of dames and knights changed by the Labour Government in 2000.

Both Snell and Walker have been great supporters of Parkinson's New Zealand. Walker was diagnosed with Parkinson's 15 years ago and says that his involvements with charities have helped him "tackle" his Parkinson's.

Walker is also pleased that Snell has received an honour, saying "Peter was my idol."

Source: NZPA

Upcoming Centre for Brain Research



*Professor Richard Faull,
Director of the Centre for
Brain Research*

The next couple of months will see the formation of the Centre for Brain Research; a unique partnership between world-class Neurologists (including Professor Richard Faull), skilled clinicians and dedicated communities.

The vision, excitement and challenge of bringing together forty neuroscience research groups from across the University of Auckland, over twenty leading neurologists and neurosurgeons from the Auckland regional District Health Boards, and fourteen community organizations (including Parkinson's New Zealand) is fast becoming a reality - thanks to the combined team effort of all involved.

The Centre will be launched on November 6th, during Parkinson's Awareness Week.

Change of Hands for Disabilities Portfolio

Prime Minister John Key has shifted the disability issues portfolio from Paula Bennett to Tariana Turia.

Mr Key said Ms Bennett had asked for the change so she could better concentrate on her main portfolio of social development and employment.

"There are big challenges in this portfolio, especially given the increasing workload on the Ministry of Social Development from unemployment," he said.

"Tariana Turia immediately accepted the important disabilities issues portfolio when I approached her to see if she was interested."

Mrs Turia is already a minister outside cabinet and said she welcomed the new role.

"I appreciate the confidence the Prime Minister has in me and my main focus will be to make sure disabled people and their families can fully participate in society," she said.

Labour's spokeswoman on disability issues, Lynne Pillay, said Ms Bennett had never been up to speed with the portfolio.

"Paula Bennett's decision underlines both her inability to understand the issues and her lack of commitment to the people and the sector," Ms Pillay said "For the first six months of this Government there was not a peep out of Ms Bennett.

"Then finally this month she announced a ministers' group to oversee policy - an announcement that was greeted with great skepticism by the Disabled Person's Assembly (DPA) - which said the committee was nothing more than window dressing."

"We now have a Minister outside of Cabinet chairing the Ministerial Committee on Disability Issues. That sums up exactly how the National government values disabled people."

However Mrs Turia remains confident about picking up the portfolio, stating "The opportunity to participate in society can be limited by many barriers, including the attitudes of others so I intend to make rapid progress by promoting a shift in thinking."

*Sources: NZPA, www.guide2.co.nz,
www.beehive.govt.nz*

UPDATE ON THE NATIONAL REVIEW

As reported in the last edition of *The Parkinsonian*, The Parkinsonism Society of New Zealand is currently conducting a review of services.

The objectives of the Review are to determine what services will be needed by people with Parkinson's and their families, carers and health professionals over the next ten years, and how they will be delivered.



Residents from Dunedin and surrounding areas discuss ideas for future services

Throughout August, workshops were held in Auckland, Rotorua, Palmerston North, Christchurch and Dunedin. Kevin McCaffrey of Effective Government Ltd facilitated the meetings, and says he was pleased with the turnout of people keen to have a say in the future of Parkinson's New Zealand.

The consultation process has involved open and honest consultation and a wide range of people were invited to attend the workshops, including members, medical professionals and members of the general public with an interest in Parkinson's.



Kevin leads a discussion at the workshop in Christchurch

In September, a Questionnaire will be sent out to everyone that receives *The Parkinsonian*, and it will also be widely distributed throughout New Zealand, giving stakeholders another opportunity to contribute to our future planning. The Questionnaire will also be available online at www.parkinsons.org.nz.

The more people who complete the Questionnaire the better, as we need your input to make decisions on what services we will provide and how we will provide them.

The information gathered throughout this review will be put together by Effective Governance. This will then be discussed by a reference group and then handed out to the divisions for comment. The final report will be presented at our AGM in 2010.

If you have any questions regarding the Review, or would like extra copies of the questionnaire, please phone 0800 473 463 or email info@parkinsons.org.nz.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

Northland



Northland members Norm Attwood and Muriel Anson enjoy their Nordic poles

Northland has recently had a trained instructor come along to teach members and carers Nordic Walking. This is proving very popular and all have found it beneficial and entertaining. Once the lessons are complete the division hopes to start a permanent walking group that will meet at many of the parks around the Far North.

South Canterbury



South Canterbury members enjoying a morning exercise

The division is very pleased with the large turnouts at their meetings, discussion and exercise groups. In June the division had a special wildlife DVD screening, and in July they enjoyed a speaker who had travelled to Antarctica.

Margaret, the division's Field Officer and Bev the Co-ordinator hosted a morning tea for the hard working volunteers who give up their time to help out. Margaret also thoroughly enjoyed the Field Officer's Conference.

Waikato

The Waikato division is currently working on two fundraising ventures in September, a 7 course lunch and an auction, with the funds going towards employing another Field Officer to help cover the very large Waikato area. In a fantastic awareness raising success, the Waikato Times has published two human interest stories discussing Parkinson's and profiling local members. Gwen, a Waikato Field Officer, is also organising a seminar on 30 October and will have an information stand at the Health and Disability expo on 18 and 19 September 2009.

Kapiti/Horowhenua

Members are preparing for two great upcoming events. On October 23rd they are having a seminar with speakers including Professor Tim Anderson, Dr Gary Cheung, Neuro Physiotherapist Anne Burston and Speech Therapist Jodie White. And on the 4th of November during Parkinson's Awareness Week they are holding a Fashion parade in conjunction with Ballenytnes. These events should be exciting opportunities for awareness, education and fundraising.

Taranaki



Taranaki members on games day

The division had a very successful games day with a range of fun activities from badminton, balls and buckets to darts. Then some brain strain with a quiz before having lunch. Members had a fantastic time not

only with the games, but with mixing and mingling - no one wanted to go home!

The Field Officers had a display at the "Wellness" day in New Plymouth, where there were lots of displays and opportunities for the public to get information from the likes of WINZ, advocacy in health, Disability Centre, and various exercise groups to name just a few.

The early-onset UPBEAT Parkinson's group had a coffee and get together early in August with a great turnout. Out of this there has been an idea put forward of a fishing trip to Taupo for a weekend in October.



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