

PARKINSON'S UK, EDINBURGH BRANCH

NOTE OF WPC SYMPOSIUM, MEETING OF RESEARCH INTEREST GROUP, BELLEVUE CHAPEL, EDINBURGH, SATURDAY NOVEMBER 30, 2013, 11.00-3.00.

The Edinburgh Branch of Parkinson's UK had sponsored three of our members, Mo Morgan, Werner Remmele and Simon Wilkinson, to attend the World Parkinson's Congress in Montreal on October 1-4, 2013. This symposium, attended by 54 members, was arranged as an opportunity for the team to report back, from a personal perspective, on what they had learned.

Ken Bowler welcomed members and introduced the trio, whose presentation was structured around the chronology of the conference.

On the **pre-conference day**, Simon had attended a session on the fundamentals of Parkinson's which stressed the importance of self-efficacy and taking control of the condition, stressing the need for good communication with physicians, building a strong support team, and learning how to take control and reduce stress through exercise and diet. Mo had immersed herself in sessions on science and advocacy, learning about different approaches to imaging and the value of different types of brain scan in papers by Nicola Pavese, Ken Marek, and Patrick Brundin. Werner had attended a symposium on interdisciplinary care & Parkinson's disease, which included comparison of four models of care provision from Canada, Israel, the Netherlands and the US and concluded that there was consensus about the need for a paradigm shift towards a multidisciplinary team. He noted that the UK model was mentioned numerous times as an example of a successful nationwide approach. The day closed with the conference **opening ceremony**, which was described as inspirational, emotional and uplifting, including speeches from 'ambassadors' and a dance performance led by the Brooklyn Parkinson's Dancers.

On **day 1** of the conference, highlights had included Virginia Lee's paper on why and how neurons die in PD and what can be done about it, and David Burn on memory and attention issues in PD. Mo was also able to report some useful networking with Steve Ford which had led to closer links between Parkinson's UK and the Dance for Parkinson's Network UK.

After a sandwich lunch, the team shared their highlights from **day 2** including Antonio Strafella and Ray Chaudhuri on non-motor manifestations of PD and David Burn's presentation on dementia and psychiatric manifestations in PD. Mo had also presented her poster, 'Can dance for Parkinson's improve cognitive functioning in PwP?' and reported on another dance-related presentation by David Leventhal and colleagues. The main focus of **day 3** had been views on the management of PD, and our team reported on papers by Ron Skelly, Roger Barker, Dave de Bronkhart and Nir Giladi, ending with the story of astronaut Rich Clifford, who kept his Parkinson's diagnosis secret and completed a six-hour spacewalk on the MIR Space Station.

The final presentation came from Fella Hammachi, a colleague of Tilo Kunath at the Centre for Regenerative Medicine. Having also attended the Montreal Congress and presented her work there, Fella shared with us her work on α -synuclein misfolding and axon degeneration as key pathological events in Parkinson's disease.

After a short question and answer panel session, and a hearty vote of thanks from the group, the meeting closed. It had been an interesting and at times inspiring day, and we were very appreciative of the effort the presenters had put into selecting, attending and reporting on their conference sessions, and their collaboration which had brought their insights together for our benefit.

Further details of individual presentations at the WPC may be found on their website, and on the app which may be downloaded there. Slides from the presenters at our seminar will also be available on the Edinburgh Branch website in due course.