

Parkinson's UK Edinburgh Branch Research Interest Group

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Newsletter August 2013 Issue No. 6

View from the Chair

Welcome to the sixth issue in which we report on the second Edinburgh Parkinson's Lecture, given by Professor Ray Chaudhuri on 25th April at the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, and entitled "*Non-motor symptoms of Parkinson's: Important yet often neglected. Why?*"

Professor Chaudhuri enthralled a capacity audience with a stimulating and informative talk. The audio files of the lecture can be downloaded from our website, together with the overheads from Professor Chaudhuri's presentation – just click on

<http://www.edinburghparkinsons.org/the-edinburgh-parkinsons-lecture-2013-2/>

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World Parkinson Congress Montréal

The third World Parkinson Congress will take place in Montréal, Canada from 1st-4th October. We are pleased to report that the Branch is providing support for three members, Werner Remmele, Mo Morgan and Simon Wilkinson, to enable them to attend and report back to the Branch on the latest research. You may recall that the Research Interest Group was established following a reporting session on the Glasgow WPC in 2010, so we may anticipate great things from Montréal!!!

Planning for WPC

As Chair of ERIG, I will meet later this month or early next month with our WPC delegates and the Branch Chairman to plan strategy for maximising coverage of WPC. Branch members are invited to advise us on the programme topics that they would like to hear about. The preliminary choices that Mo, Simon and Werner have made are now available on our web pages at

<http://www.edinburghparkinsons.org/world-parkinsons-congress/>

Research News

Important advance in disease-modifying therapy

A team of German researchers led by Jens Wagner, Sergey Ryazanov, Andrei Leonov, Johannes Levin and Song Shi, reports an important breakthrough in the search for disease-modifying therapy for Parkinson's and other neurological disorders. Parkinson's disease is characterised by the formation of aggregates of the protein α -synuclein in the brain. Such oligomeric aggregations are presumed to be the key neurotoxic agents. In an article published on-line on 19 April 2013, in the journal [Acta Neuropathologica](#), the research team describe work on Anle138b, an oligomer modulator, showing that in three different mouse models of PD, it strongly inhibits oligomer accumulation, neuronal degeneration and disease progression. Furthermore it has no detectable toxicity at therapeutic doses and an excellent bioavailability and blood-brain-barrier penetration.

Exenatide may be disease-modifying for PD

...a drug previously approved for diabetes treatment may be disease modifying for Parkinson's ...

Exenatide is a type 2 diabetes treatment that has been shown to have neuroprotective/neurorestorative properties in preclinical models of neurodegeneration. A new study by Aviles-Olmos et al published in the Journal of Clinical Investigation reports on the results of a trial to evaluate the progress of 45 patients with moderate Parkinson's disease (PD). Single-blinded rating of the exenatide group suggested clinically relevant improvements in PD across motor and cognitive measures compared with the control group.

In a commentary on the paper (<http://www.jci.org/articles/view/69690>), Roger Barker and colleagues say:

In this issue, Aviles-Olmos et al. describe a first in Parkinson's disease (PD) patient study using a drug previously approved for diabetes treatment. In addition to suggesting that the drug may indeed be disease modifying in PD, their innovative approach suggests there may be more rapid and inexpensive avenues for testing novel therapies in PD.

For more background see Wikiversity page:

http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/PD_Neuroprotection/Exendin-4_%28EX-4%29

Breaking news: Researchers at the UCL Institute of Neurology have been awarded a grant of almost \$2million by the Michael J Fox Foundation to conduct trials of exenatide

Web site

The Edinburgh Branch web site is at www.edinburghparkinsons.org and the Research Interest Group page is www.edinburghparkinsons.org/research-interest-group/

Any queries should be directed to the Editor and Chair of the Research Interest Group, [Ken Bowler](#) by email to ken@edinburghparkinsons.org

Parkinson's UK is the operating name of the Parkinson's Disease Society of the United Kingdom. A charity registered in England and Wales (258197) and in Scotland (SC037554).