Are we having fun yet?

Blog by Michael B. Gerber
Los Angeles, California

The real question is, if we are not having fun, why not? Fun is a choice, a perspective and an attitude towards life. So if you are not having fun, it may be time to ask yourself why not? Life’s challenges and circumstances provide all the fodder any of us need to have fun. Being able to laugh (especially at ourselves) and have fun make having to deal with our challenges all the more doable and bearable. In our house we like to play a game that I call “Fun With Hearing Loss.” My hearing is just not as good as it used to be and there is no telling what I am going to hear. In fact, what I hear sometimes is pretty funny stuff. Our MS Walk Team is called the “JiggyWiggits” and the name comes from my constantly singing the wrong lyrics to a song a like. Can you guess the song? When I am out and about in my wheelchair, especially at hospitals or airports, I have made a habit out of pulling my chair up next to someone “older” than me that is also in a wheelchair and asking “Are you here for the races?” The response is almost always the same. First they are startled by the question and then they laugh. The wheelchair allows me to spread a little good cheer that I could not have done otherwise. My doctor never knows what to expect from me. Not long ago he wanted to check my coordination. He sat in front of me on his little round stool (doesn’t it seem like every doctor has one of these?) with his hands on his knees and said “Go like this”, He then flipped his hands over repeatedly and quickly. So I did exactly as he did. I reached over, put my hands on his knees and began flipping them back and forth. The look on his face was priceless. I am sure that no patient had ever done that before. A memory I am not soon to forget, all because I was willing to have fun. I am not the only one who thinks that having fun is a good idea.
Even **Listerine** has gotten into the act and created a mouthwash for children. Where there is plaque on the children’s teeth, the teeth turn blue (Only temporarily! It’s easy to rinse.) The blue encourages kids to do a better job of brushing and that can’t be a bad thing. The fact is that having fun and making things fun can and does make the world a better place. It makes people laugh, brings smiles to faces and can break up the monotony or tensions of an otherwise mundane activities or ordinary day. Recently I received an e-mail which directed me to a website hosted by Volkswagon at [www.thefuntheory.com](http://www.thefuntheory.com). On the site it reads “This site is dedicated to the thought that something as simple as fun is the easiest way to change people’s behaviour for the better. “ Wow! What a concept! I was blown away by that idea. Spend a few minutes on the website and you will discover some of the fun ideas they have implemented to get people to take the stairs instead of escalators, throw away trash and recycle. It is brilliant clever and wonderful.

Changing people’s behavior for the better? That sounds like a choice we could all make. **Participate. Make a difference. Live a life that matters.**


**UPDATE FROM TNA FACIAL PAIN NEWS**

**Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers**

**The Leading Publisher in Biotechnology**

**Medical Acupuncture Sinusitis With Polyposis Presenting as Refractory Trigeminal Neuralgia Treated With Acupuncture and Chinese Herbal Decoction**

Edwin Yong Miao, MD, MB

M. Modern Traditional Chinese Medical Clinic-Acupuncture, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

**Abstract Background:** Trigeminal neuralgia is a common neuralgia condition. Most data available relate to primary trigeminal neuralgia, but little has been published about secondary trigeminal neuralgia treated with Chinese medicine.

**Objective:** To describe a case of secondary trigeminal neuralgia treated with acupuncture and Chinese herbal decoction.
**Design and Patient:** Case report of an Australian woman who presented in August 2005 with severe symptoms of trigeminal neuralgia (diagnosed in 2002). She had undergone carbamazepine treatment for 3 years. She also presented with sinusitis with polyposis.

**Intervention:** Acupuncture needles were applied with manual methods to the affected ophthalmic branch and maxillary branch of the trigeminal nerve. Acupoints selected were ST 7 (Xiaguan), SI 19 (Tinggong), Ex-HN5 (Taiyang), GB 14 (Yangbai) (all right side), and LI 4 (Hegu) (both sides). De Qi was elicited every 3 minutes in a 20-minute session. Acupuncture was performed once a week for 12 sessions. Also, an individually designed Chinese herbal decoction was used as a coordinated approach for the treatment of sinusitis with polyposis.

**Main Outcome Measures:** Resolution of trigeminal neuralgia symptoms and improved symptoms of sinusitis.

**Results:** The severe trigeminal neuralgia gradually disappeared within 7 days after the first session of acupuncture treatment. This result was maintained during a 12-session acupuncture treatment course as well as during an herbal treatment period. Most importantly, this result has been maintained for more than 3 years. The patient's sinusitis was also resolved.

**Conclusions:** The combination of acupuncture and Chinese herbal decoction treatment led to a complete disappearance of symptoms of trigeminal neuralgia (after a 3-year course of carbamazepine, which became ineffective 2 months prior to acupuncture). This approach may offer a new treatment and supports the necessity for further research to evaluate Traditional Chinese Medicine in the treatment of trigeminal neuralgia and sinusitis.
Mobility and Technical Aids

Q :
Could you please provide some information on the Walkaide. The device was profiled on the evening news recently. The indications/benefits were that it could assist with walking issues in individuals with MS. It appears to be quite expensive. Does it actually work and if someone is interested - how does one get a referral for an assessment to see if they are a potential candidate for one.

A :

The Walkaide is a type of Functional Electrical Stimulation (FES) that is used to help “lift” the foot during walking. The walkaide uses a tilt sensor that senses the “tilt” of the shin bone to activate the stimulation during walking. There are similar devices such as the Bioness L300 and the Odstock Drop Foot Stimulator (ODFS), which use a heel switch in the shoe to activate the stimulation. The Walkaide (as well as the Odstock and Bioness) uses electrodes that attach to the outside of the skin, just below the knee on the outer portion of the lower leg. The device emits electrical stimulation to the leg, typically at the time when your toe leaves the floor as you push off. The stimulation continues until approximately the time that your heel strikes down on the floor, then it shuts down briefly until the leg starts to swing through again. These devices can be used in place of an ankle foot orthosis (AFO) for some patients. The devices work well, particularly for people who have an isolated foot drop and most other areas of the leg are relatively strong. There is also an “exercise mode” which allows the user to use the stimulation to exercise the muscles that pick up the foot, hopefully strengthening the muscles as much as possible. The electrodes need to be replaced regularly (once a week is my experience) which is an added cost. It also takes some training to walk efficiently and to consistently place the electrodes in the proper location, even with the electrodes attached to a leg cuff.

The Odstock is the least expensive of the 3 devices, but it requires the use of wires between the device and the electrodes which can be bothersome to the user. The Bioness is wireless, but it tends to be the most expensive option. In the USA, these devices have only been approved for use in incomplete spinal cord injuries and even that diagnosis has considerable payment restrictions. The Canadian health care system is also not approving these devices for coverage at this time. On rare occasions, private insurers will pay a portion of the cost. For almost all patients, however, these devices are “self pay” items.
Walkaide is currently conducting a research trial in Alberta, Canada, with the hope of enrolling 550 clients with foot drop as part of a pilot project through Alberta Health. From the Walkaide web site, you can access a list of certified orthotists in Alberta as well as across Canada who can perform fittings of a Walkaide and help you determine if it is right for you. You do not have to participate in the research trial to try a Walkaide or similar device, but you will need a referral from a physician so that you may have a trial of the device. If you prefer a FES device other than the Walkaide, you can access their distributors through their websites which are listed below.

It is important to remember that FES devices are not appropriate for everyone who may drag their toes as there may be other factors that complicate walking. For example, people with weak hip flexors may struggle with a FES device. As a test for hip flexor weakness, in a seated position try to lift your knee straight up. If you can't lift it efficiently, there may be more extensive weakness in the hip that causes the dragging of the leg. A specific exercise program from a Physical Therapist can often help with this problem. If the dragging of the leg persists, however, a device called a Hip Flexion Assist Orthosis (HFAO) can help, which is an orthosis that helps to lift the entire leg during walking. Weakness in the thigh muscle (quadriceps) can also complicate the effectiveness of the FES devices, so a careful evaluation from a trained practitioner is important.

The Bioness L300 and the Walkaide have been featured on the news reports in Canada and in the US. Although the devices are very useful for many people with MS or other conditions, they are not appropriate for everyone. "Try before you buy" is my best advice. The websites of the devices that I have mentioned are listed here:

- **Odstock**
- **Walkaide**
- **Bioness L300**
- **Hip Flexion Assist Orthosis**
Need a hand with your taxes?
If you are unable to complete your income tax and benefit return by yourself and are unable to pay for assistance, our Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) may be for you.

The CRA offers training to volunteers who can help you complete your income tax and benefit return if your income is low and your tax situation is simple.

Volunteers do not complete income tax and benefit returns for deceased persons, bankrupt individuals, or individuals who have capital gains or losses, employment expenses, or business or rental income and expenses.

Volunteer tax preparation clinics are generally offered between February and April of each year in various locations across Canada, however, some tax clinics operate year round. For more information about this free service or to get information on community organizations in your area that participate in the CVITP, call us at 1-800-959-8281.

Matters: A Program for Couples Living with MS - Teleconference Series - In collaboration with the National MS Society

Tuesdays: February 23 - March 30: 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM ET (6pm CST, 5pm MST, 4pm PST)

Reclaim your well-being is a teleclass series for couples who are looking for solutions to the emotional havoc brought on by MS. In this series, scenarios of couples living with MS will demonstrate how couples can effectively manage some of the emotional backlash triggered by common MS symptoms. Experts from the National MS Society and Can Do MS will review symptoms and treatments, as well as skills for couples to talk about and solve some of these very difficult problems. Learn wellness strategies for managing MS you can implement immediately. Learn more...

This was previously called the Heuga Center and is now called Can Do MS Society.
Elke Storvick would like to arrange an interview with a person with MS so that she can learn more about what it is like to live with the disease.

Interested parties please call Elke at 604-329-9405, or email: elke13@rocketmail.com
Conference Housing Society  
7555 120A Street  
Surrey, BC  
1- 3brm unit, Rent $1140 a month  
3-2brm unit, Rent $1010 a month  
Avail: Now  
Call: 904-944-4988

NON - WHEELCHAIR MODIFIED HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

- Standard bathroom size, counter heights and appliances
- As these units are not designed for wheelchair access this agency will only consider families where the person with a disability is ambulatory with cane, crutches, walker....
- Families with children with small wheelchairs may also apply.

Hoy Creek Housing Co-op
905 Glen Drive  
Coquitlam, BC  
2 brm, tub & grab bars  
Avail: Now  
No Subsidy Available  
Market Rent $ 729  
Call: Sandy 904-945-5364 (Wednesday and Thursdays 9 -2:30)

Spruce Housing Co-op
9282 -121 Street  
Surrey, BC  
2 brm tub & grab bars  
Market Rent $ 722  
No Subsidy Available  
Avail: Now  
Call: Elleen 604-561-6070
Subsidized Housing

Lions Park Housing  
4200 Gary Road  
Richmond, BC  
1br, wheel - in shower, subsidy  
Avail: Feb 1st 2010  
Call: Marney 604-274 6311 Ex.300

Affordable Housing Societies  
Princess Place  
321 Princess Ave (Princess & Cordova)  
2 brm, tub, subsidy  
Avail: February 1st 2010  
Call Maria 604-521-0818 Loc. 225

- Would prefer a family but will also consider applicants needing a room for an overnight caregiver.

Conference Housing Society  
7555 120A Street  
Surrey, BC  
2 brm, tub, subsidy  
Avail: Now  
Call: 604-944-4868

NON - WHEELCHAIR MODIFIED HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

- Standard bathroom size, counter heights and appliances  
- As this unit is not designed for wheelchair access this agency will only consider families where the person with a disability is ambulatory with cane, crutches, walker...  
- Families with children with small wheelchairs may also apply.

Hall Towers  
7264 Kingsway  
Burnaby, BC  
bachelor suite, tub & grab bars, subsidy  
Avail: Now  
- Those interested should be sure to list this building on their BC Housing waiting list. Fill in both the general and supplementary application forms.  
  http://www.bchousing.org/applicant/apply#download  
- Bachelor vacancies in Surrey too.
Market Rent Housing

Private Rental Opportunity
5750 -157 Street
Surrey, BC
4 brm, wheel-in shower
Rent $1400 a month (includes utilities)
Avail: Now
Call: 604-710-7853

- This is a partly modified home. Kitchen counter and appliances are standard.

Conference Housing Society
7555 120A Street
Surrey, BC
1-3brm unit, Rent $1140 a month
3-2brm unit, Rent $1010 a month
Avail: Now
Call: 604-944-4866

NON - WHEELCHAIR MODIFIED HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

- Standard bathroom size, counter heights and appliances
- As these units are not designed for wheelchair access this agency will only consider families where the person with a disability is ambulatory with cane, crutches, walker....
- Families with children with small wheelchairs may also apply.

Hoy Creek Housing Co-op
905 Glen Drive
Coquitlam, BC
2 brm, tub & grab bars
Avail: Now
No Subsidy Available
Market Rent $ 729
Call: Sandy 604-945-5864 (Wednesday and Thursdays 9-2:30)

Spruce Housing Co-op
9282 -121 Street
Surrey, BC
2 brm tub & grab bars
Market Rent $ 722
No Subsidy Available
Avail: Now
Call: Eileen 504-581-6070

Compiled by:

Louise Gaudry
Intake & Community Resource Consultant
Job Description
North Shore Community Resources Society
Coordinator Caregiver Support Program

Job Summary
The Coordinator of the Caregiver Support Program is responsible for running all aspects of a well established support program for people caregiving for a family member or friend with an illness or disability. This is a full time contract position starting in January 2010 and ending March 31, 2010 with likelihood of becoming full time permanent position beginning April 1, 2010.

Regular hours are Monday to Friday 9:00am to 4:30pm – 35 hours per week. Some evening and weekend hours will be required.

Reports To: Manager of Information Programs

Key Duties and Responsibilities

General: The Coordinator facilitates support groups, provides information, makes referrals as needed and conducts and coordinates workshops for people caring for a senior or other family member at home or in a care facility. The program is designed to make caregivers aware of resources, supports and techniques that will assist them in their caregiving roles.

Responsibilities
• Establish, facilitate and/or maintain support network groups of caregivers through regular meetings and activities.
• Conduct public education sessions on caregiving by speaking to or providing speakers for caregivers and interested community groups. This includes an educational series as well as individual sessions on various topics.
• Promote the program to other agencies and the community in general.
• Write media releases and handle media relations with respect to program activities.
• Work collaboratively with Project Manager – Supporting Caregivers Across the Lifespan
• Liaise with agencies, health professionals and others involved in supporting caregiving in the community to maintain good relations, encourage referrals of caregivers to the program.
• Provide individual in- depth consultations when requested and as time permits.
• Organize and conduct three meetings of advisory committee per year. Coordinating advisory meetings with the Manager Supporting Caregivers Across the Lifespan
• Contribute to a bi-monthly caregivers newsletter
• Recruit, supervise and evaluate program volunteers
• Maintain and add to library resources relevant to caregiving
• Conduct client surveys and evaluations of the program on a regular basis and report results.
• Keep program statistics
• Submit all reports to the program manager and to the funding agencies
• Participate in community partner meetings such as Seniors Coalition and North Shore Interagency Network as needed.
Engage in ongoing professional development activities

Qualifications:
A degree in social sciences, therapeutic recreation, social work, nursing or equivalent combination of education and experience.
Knowledge of North Shore community services
Proven group facilitation skills
Teaching experience- understanding of principles of adult education
Experience working with caregivers and their care receivers
Empathy
Excellent organizational and communications skills

Rate: $20.69 per hr. to start.

Please send a covering letter, resume and list of three references via fax, mail or email to:
Barb MacLellan, Manager of Information Programs
(barb.maclellan@nsr.bc.ca)
North Shore Community Resources
#201 Capilano Mall, 935 Marine Drive
North Vancouver, BC, V7P 1S3
Fax: 604-985-0645
This position is subject to final funding approval.

**Supporting Caregivers Across the Life Span** is a multi-year, federally funded project to support caregivers of all kinds in the community. It is for people of all ages caregiving for a family member or friend with an illness or disability.

The Program Assistant is responsible for general office duties associated with the project such as creating packages for course participants, preparing mail outs for clients, client registration record maintenance, education session registration management, collating evaluations from programs, filing, assisting with reports, helping with promotion and other duties.

This is a part time position of 21 hours per week from April 1, 2010 to Sept. 30, 2012 but will temporarily be full time beginning in January 2010 to March 31, 2010.

Full- time regular hours are Monday to Friday 9:00am to 4:30pm – 35 hours per week. Some evening and weekend hours will be required. Part time Hours April 1, 2010 - Sept 30, 2012 will be negotiable.

**Reports To:** Manager of Information Programs

**Key Duties and Responsibilities**

**General:**

The Program Assistant works under the direction of the Project Coordinator and collaborates with the researcher/writer to help realize the project goals. The assistant will be responsible for providing administrative support to all project activities. The position includes some liaison with caregivers, community groups, health care professionals, employers, workshop facilitators and other who will be vital to delivering the project outcomes.

**Responsibilities**

- Assist with public education sessions and pilot projects related to caregiving, educational series, meetings, individual workshops, as well as focus groups of caregivers, health professionals and others events.
- Coordinate food and supplies for workshops and other events – will involve shopping.
- Set up registration for workshops, courses or events on Excel program and monitor the registration process.
• **Qualifications** Take responsibility for all registrations and monies. Set up for groups, presentations and workshops. Work on the day of the event if needed.
  
  - Assist with liaison with agencies, health professionals, community groups, employers and others involved in supporting caregiving in the community.
  - Send info to caregivers and professionals and employers via email and mail.
  - Photo copying as needed
  
  • Work in support of contract personnel to ensure effective delivery of contracted services.
  • Help with the production of a bi-monthly caregivers newsletter.
  • Work with project volunteers if any.
  • Help to administer client surveys and evaluations of the project on a regular basis.
  • Help to gather program statistics.

Other duties as assigned.

High School graduation and some post secondary training in a related field.
Knowledge of North Shore community services an asset
Understanding of the issues faced by caregivers and their care receivers an asset
Empathy
Excellent computer skills
Good organizational skills
Good oral and written communications skills
Ability to work as part of a team as well independently when necessary

**Rate:** $16.00 per hr. Benefits package available.

Please send a covering letter, resume and list of three references via fax, mail or email to: Barb MacLellan, Manager of Information Programs
(barb.maclellan@nscr.bc.ca)

North Shore Community Resources
#201 Capilano Mall, 935 Marine Drive
North Vancouver, BC, V7P 1S3
Fax: 604-985-0645
Job Posting
North Shore Community Resources Society
Researcher/Writer - Supporting Caregivers Across the Life Span Project

Job Summary
This position is subject to final project funding approval. Supporting Caregivers Across the Life Span is a multi-year, federally funded project to support caregivers of all kinds in the community. The Researcher/Writer will do research and will write or assist with writing resulting from the research, associated with developing new website materials and for other aspects of the project.

This is a full time position beginning January 2010 to March 31, 2010 and will become a part time position of 21 hours per week from April 1, 2010 to Sept. 30, 2012. Regular office hours are Monday to Friday 9:00am to 4:30pm – 35 hours per week. However, some flexibility as to hours is available and some evening and weekend hours may be required. Part time hours will be negotiable.

Reports To: Manager of Information Programs

Key Duties and Responsibilities
General:
The Researcher/Writer of the Supporting Caregivers Across the Life Span Project will work closely with the Project Coordinator to complete research at various junctures in the project and provide reports, summaries and some initial analysis. As a writer the person will write reports on various phases of the research and the project as a whole and will prepare content for the website. He/she will also do writing associated with promotion of the project, the production of new materials and resources for caregivers, health professionals and employers and will help with the preparation of the updated Family Caregiver Resource Guide - North Shore Edition.

Responsibilities
• Conduct a comprehensive review of current literature related to caregiving.
• Help to create evaluation tools and forms for various components of the project
• Help to draft reports and make recommendations based on research.
• Help to write media releases and promotion and information materials
• With help and direction from the Coordinator create new materials on caregiving for the NSCR
• Website
Upload material to the website
Key Duties and Responsibilities

General:
The Researcher/Writer of the Supporting Caregivers Across the Life Span Project will work closely with the Project Coordinator to complete research at various junctures in the project and provide reports, summaries and some initial analysis. As a writer the person will write reports on various phases of the research and the project as a whole and will prepare content for the website. He/she will also do writing associated with promotion of the project, the production of new materials and resources for caregivers, health professionals and employers and will help with the preparation of the updated Family Caregiver Resource Guide - North Shore Edition.

Responsibilities

• Conduct a comprehensive review of current literature related to Caregiving.
• Help to create evaluation tools and forms for various components of the project.
• Help to draft reports and make recommendations based on research.
• Help to write media releases and promotion and information materials.
• With help and direction from the Coordinator create new materials on caregiving for the NSCR website.
• Upload material to the website.
• Create or customize additional other resource materials for caregivers, health professionals and employers as required.
• Participate in advisory committee meetings as needed.
• Edit and produce a bi-monthly caregivers newsletter (print and electronic)
• Undertake additional research on specific topics relating to the project on an ongoing basis as needed.
• Help to write the final project report.
• Submit timely reports to the supervising manager and project coordinator

Participate in community partner meetings such as Seniors Coalition and North Shore Interagency Network as needed.
Qualifications:

A degree in library sciences, social sciences, nursing or equivalent combination of education and experience.
Excellent writing skills
Excellent organizational and communications skills
Strong research skills and experience
Facility doing online research
Knowledge of North Shore community and service organizations
Understanding of the issues faced by family caregivers
Empathy
Able to work well with team members combined with an ability to work independently as needed.

Rate: $20.00 per hr. Benefits package available.

Please send a covering letter, resume and list of three references via fax, mail or email to:
Barb MacLellan, Manager of Information Programs
(barb.maclellan@nscr.bc.ca)

North Shore Community Resources
#201 Capilano Mall, 935 Marine Drive
North Vancouver, BC, V7P 1S3
Fax: 604-985-0645

Let's get Physical

EX “N” FLEX

A passive/Active Exercise Therapy for the Mobility challenged. Helps with strength, endurance and flexibility.
The Ex N' Flex EF-100 Arm Therapy Machine has been designed for those who have little or no control over arm, shoulder and trunk movement.

In **passive mode**, the arms and shoulder are rotated by the electrical motor in a slow predictable orbital motion.

In **active mode** you can assist the motor to move the arm crank with your own muscles, thus building and maintaining strength and endurance in the arm and shoulder.

**Potential Benefits:**
- Maintains flexibility
- Nourishment of joints
- Relief of pain and stiffness
- Improved arm motion / finger control
- Improved eye / hand coordination
- Decreased Tone / Spasticity
- Increased Circulation
- Increased Joint Mobility

**Potential Benefits:**
- Increased strength & flexibility
- Increased circulation
- Increased joint mobility
- Decreased edema
- Decreased spasms
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