

PSG NEWSLETTER



Parkinson Study Group, 1351 Mt. Hope Avenue, Suite 223, Rochester, NY 14620, www.parkinson-study-group.org

A Message from the Chairs...



Karl Kiebertz and Karen Marder

As Karen and I move into the second half of our leadership term, we are impressed that there has been so much activity, and we want to thank all of the PSG members who contribute to our mission. The PSG Executive Committee is proud of the many members that volunteer their time to serve on the study teams, working groups and committees. Most members are familiar with the PSG web site where we list the awards funded, recent news on grant opportunities, clinical trials in progress, and more. We have posted biobites and pictures of the members of the Scientific Review Committee and Mentoring Committee to help you become familiar with their expertise and what they have to offer you. We encourage you to visit our web site from time to time to keep up to date with PSG activities. We have updated our list of publications that highlights recent publications that you might find interesting and useful.

Although we can celebrate our many activities and successes, we certainly have had our challenges too. We continue to network with industry sponsors on new clinical trials and seek government and other funding for new trials whether interventional or observational. The recent economic crisis has made progress more difficult. Currently, the QE3, SURE-PD, STEADY-PD, and SPIN-PD studies are engaging some of our sites, but we remain hopeful that we will be able to offer more opportunities for all sites to be involved in trials in the near future. We are also hopeful about recent NIH grant submissions that may involve our sites, for example, Genetic and Environmental Modifiers of PD (GEM PD), Carlie Tanner, PI. We have credentialed new and highly enthusiastic investigators, and are eager to have them participate in trials.

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Beyond clinical trials and ongoing data-mining research projects, the PSG has made strides in offering mentoring guidance to early career investigators and in training mentors. Through the new PSG Advisor Program, that began in July of this year, we have matched 10 researchers with advisors, and have an impressive bank of 46 advisors who volunteer their time to make this happen. We have encouraged researchers to get involved with our working groups because the working groups are the driving force to generate proposals for new research studies and for retrospective data-mining projects. There is a wealth of data yet to be mined and we are working on developing a secure server to make this data more accessible.

In 2008, the PSG became involved in the Parkinson's Disease Foundation's Clinical Research Learning Institute that provides training to community leaders who have PD with the knowledge and skills necessary to become engaged as effective patient representatives within the clinical research process. We hope we can continue to branch out and get involved in new areas to improve treatment and quality of life for persons affected by Parkinson's disease.

Karen and I appreciate everyone's contributions and hope you feel comfortable contacting us with your ideas. Thank you and on behalf of the Executive Committee we wish you all the best for a happy and healthy holiday season.

Karl Kiebertz, Chair
Karen Marder, Co-chair
PSG Executive Committee

PSG Symposium

The 23rd Annual Symposium on Etiology, Pathogenesis, and Treatment of Parkinson's Disease (PD) and Other Movement Disorders (OMD) was held on Sunday, October 11, 2009 at the ANA Annual Meeting in Baltimore. This was presented by the Parkinson Study Group, in collaboration with the Huntington Study Group, Cooperative Ataxia Group, Dystonia Study Group, Myoclonus Study Group, Tourette Syndrome Study Group and the Tremor Research Group. Drs. Michael Schwarzschild and Jang-Ho Cha chaired the event. The Organizing Committee consisted of Roger Albin, Michael Schwarzschild, Tanya Simuni, Michele Tagliati, Jang-Ho Cha, Andrew Feigin, Guerry Peavy, Julie Stout, Karl Kieburtz, Roseanna Battista, Donna Moszkowicz and Karen Rabinowitz.

The two keynote speakers were **Dr. Nicolaas Bohnen**, presenting on "**Mobility Impairment and Cholinergic Hypofunction in Parkinson Disease: In Vivo Imaging Correlates**" and **Dr. Elan Louis**, presenting on "**Essential Tremor: A Neurodegenerative Disease?**". In addition to the keynote speakers, the audience enjoyed 8 platform presentations on a variety of PD and OMD topics. Throughout the program 26 posters were displayed and formally presented by the primary author at the end of the platform presentations. All platform and poster abstracts were published in the September issue of *Movement Disorders* and on-line: <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/122596291/HTMLSTART>.



Dr. Bohnen's keynote talk focused on the use of PET imaging to study neurochemical mechanisms underlying falls in Parkinson's disease.

He presented results of a study comparing nigrostriatal dopaminergic versus pedunculopontine (PPN)-thalamic cholinergic activity. There was no difference in nigrostriatal dopaminergic activity between PD fallers versus non-fallers. In contrast, fallers had lower cholinergic activity reflecting PPN dysfunction. Findings are consistent with other data indicating that cholinergic PPN degeneration is a major factor leading to impaired postural control and gait dysfunction in PD. The research may provide new leads for non-dopaminergic therapy of balance problems in PD.



Dr. Louis' keynote talk discussed the evidence supporting the notion that ET is a neurodegenerative disease. The evidence included clinical points (e.g., the insidious onset and progressive course), data from postmortem studies

that show Purkinje cell loss and other changes (Purkinje cell swellings), and data from epidemiological studies (e.g., studies showing increased risks of Parkinson's disease, dementia and mortality).

The award for best PD abstract went to **Dr. Ergun Uc** for his abstract on "**Road Safety in Drivers with Parkinson's Disease**". The award for the best OMD abstract went to **Dr. Karen McFarland** for her abstract on "**Huntingtin Binding to DNA**". We congratulate all platform and poster presenters on a job well done.

This program was supported by **FP Pharmaceutical Corp., Lundbeck, Inc., Teva Neuroscience, UCB, Inc., Amicus Therapeutics, Inc., Ceregene, Inc., Medivation, NeuroSearch, Genentech, The Movement Disorders Society, and Biogen Idec**. This program would not be possible without their generous support.

****CALL FOR ABSTRACTS****

Plans are underway for the **24th Annual PSG Symposium** which will be held on **Saturday, May 15, 2010** directly after the PSG Annual Meeting at the Four Seasons Resort in Irving, Texas. The symposium will consist of current issues in genetic and environmental contributions to Parkinson's disease and other movement disorders with peer-reviewed platform and poster presentations designed to communicate recent research advances in the field of Parkinson's disease, Huntington's disease, ataxia, dystonia, myoclonus, Tourette's syndrome, tremor and other movement disorders to professionals in neurology and related disciplines. The **Call for Abstracts** is out and available through the PSG web site with regular abstract deadline on **January 15, 2010** and late-breaking abstract deadline on February 15, 2010.

PSG Co-founder Inducted into IOM



Ira Shoulson, MD

Dr. Ira Shoulson, one of the co-founders of the Parkinson Study Group, was inducted to the Institute of Medicine (IOM) in October. This is one of the nation's highest honors in the fields of medicine and health.

Dr. Shoulson is known for his work on the DATATOP study which looked at whether the drug deprenyl, vitamin E, or some combination of the two might slow the progression of the disease. The study showed that Deprenyl provided patients with some relief and has been used in the treatment of Parkinson's disease ever since. The study data has been a rich environment for many data-mining projects. Dr. Shoulson has secured funding from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke to follow participants of the DATATOP study and other studies to monitor the progression of their disease, as well as obtain blood and tissue samples that will generate further investigations.

Dr. Shoulson remains an active member of the PSG to this day and we continue to benefit from his many contributions to the field. On behalf of the PSG Executive Committee and all members, we congratulate him for this wonderful honor.

Secure Data Server to Be Developed

In September, the PSG was awarded a \$73,500 grant from The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research to purchase a server capable of providing secure access to PSG datasets. The goal is to make information from clinical trials more widely available, helping to make the design and conduct of future trials more effective and efficient.

For researchers interested in exploring new ideas using information from completed trials, PSG will develop methods to let researchers view and analyze data but not keep it. A new review process will ensure that researchers have a clear and practical use for the information and that they share the results of their projects. At least three previously restricted databases are expected to be available to researchers within one year.



The PSG "toolkit" is a valuable resource that guides investigators on how the PSG databases can be used and what types of projects can be done. We have updated the procedures for new proposal submissions, added a table of PSG proposals that have either been approved as PSG studies or awarded. The PSG Database Inventory and Database Inventory Assessments Spreadsheet is also part of the toolkit and investigators should refer to that when planning their projects. Go to: <http://www.parkinson-study-group.org/PSGToolkit.asp>.

The PSG Executive Committee and Scientific Review Committee encourages proposing investigators to discuss their idea for a project with other experts in the field and to make use of the PSG Working Groups and get assistance, if needed, from the PSG Mentoring Committee. Peggy Auinger, PSG biostatistician, can be contacted regarding any data-mining questions at peggy.auinger@ctcc.rochester.edu.

Also available is PD DOC (www.pd-doc.org) and PD Online Research (www.pdonlineresearch.org). It is worth checking out these sites when developing new research proposals.

Study Updates

SPIN-PD by Jennifer Harman

SPIN-PD (Spectroscopy in Parkinson Disease Diagnosis). Congratulations to the Milton S. Hershey Medical Center for enrolling the first subject! We currently have 7 sites active and are working hard to complete subcontracts and IRB submissions for the remaining 30 sites. SPIN-PD is a 2 year study using blood samples from 300 PD subjects and 200 Healthy Control subjects to determine if biospectroscopy would be useful in detecting biomarkers of PD or PD progression. This study is funded by Molecular Biometrics, Inc. which obtained a grant from the Michael J. Fox Foundation (MJFF).

STEADY-PD by Cheryl Deeley

STEADY-PD (Safety, Tolerability, and Efficacy Assessment of **Dynacirc** CR for PD) enrolled its first subject 9/14/09. We now have 12/17 sites up and running and have enrolled 10 subjects. We expect to have all 17 sites up by early November. The study enrollment target end-date is planned for August 2010. STEADY-PD is a pilot Phase II double-blind, placebo-controlled tolerability and dose finding study of isradipine CR in subjects with early Parkinson's disease. Isradipine CR is a dihydropyridine calcium channel blocker, approved for treatment of hypertension. This class of calcium channel blocking agents may provide neuroprotection and may reduce the risk of developing PD and slow disease progression. One hundred subjects with early PD will participate in this 12-month trial. Secondary endpoints include the impact of isradipine CR on motor disability, blood pressure, cognition, PD quality of life and PD-related disabilities. Dr. Tanya Simuni at Northwestern University and Dr. Kevin Biglan at the University of Rochester lead this study. This study is funded by the Michael J. Fox Foundation (MJFF) and the Dixon Foundation.

SURE-PD by Alice Rudolph

As you may know, the DATATOP blood and CSF urate results and similar results from the PRECEPT study provided knowledge about the progression of PD and contributed to the rationale for the SURE-PD clinical trial. These DATATOP results were recently published (Urate as a Predictor of the Rate of Clinical Decline in Parkinson Disease, Ascherio A., et al., *ArchNeurol*.2009;66(12):(doi:10.1001/archneurol.2009.247), and SURE-PD has obtained some publicity as a result. Given that enrollment has been slow since beginning in June, we are hoping that

the coverage will increase interest in our study of inosine's safety and ability to raise urate in subjects with early PD. We thank the 23 sites that expressed interest in being considered to replace the two sites that had to withdraw due to staffing issues. The Steering Committee is currently in the process of selecting the replacement sites and is also proposing to add several additional sites. This study is funded by the Michael J. Fox Foundation (MJFF).

QE3 by Rory Doolan

The objective of the **QE3** (Effects of Coenzyme Q10 on Early Parkinson Disease) study is to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of high dosages of CoQ (2400 mg and 1200 mg vs placebo) in slowing clinical decline in patients with early PD. Participants, who are followed every four months over a 16 month period, must be diagnosed with PD within the last 5 years and not have been on dopaminergic therapy for more than 90 days. The study passed the halfway point in September 2009 on its way to enrolling 600 subjects at 69 sites. Over 350 subjects have been enrolled to date. This study is funded by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

PostCEPT by Emily Flagg

PostCEPT (A Longitudinal Observational Follow-up of the PRECEPT Study Cohort) is well into the third year of follow up visits. The study just implemented its third amendment with the primary change being the addition of designation of a research proxy at the decision of the Investigator. The research proxy has become necessary for this longitudinal study for PD subjects who may begin experiencing declining cognition. The baseline report of PostCEPT (primary author Bernard Ravina, MD), "A Longitudinal Program for Biomarker Development in Parkinson disease: A Feasibility Study" was published in *Movement Disorders* 2009 Oct 30; 24(14):2081-90. This study is funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

PROBE by Emily Flagg

PROBE (Blood α -Synuclein, Gene Expression, and Smell Testing as Diagnostic and Prognostic Biomarkers in Parkinson's Disease) completed enrollment at the end of 2008 with a total of 209 subjects (102 PD, 27 MSA, 26 PSP and 54 Healthy Control subjects). The database was locked in May 2009. The two research labs are in the process of conducting biomarker analyses and we anticipate having some initial results from these analyses towards the end of the year. This study was funded by the Department of Defense (DOD).

More Study Updates, next page...

Study Updates (Con't)

PROGENI by *Tatiana Foroud and Cheryl Halter*

We are sorry to report that the **PROGENI** grant renewal was reviewed this summer and did not receive a fundable score. We are currently revising the application and will resubmit the grant for the November NIH deadline. We are optimistic that this productive study will resume.

We continue to work with families interested in participating in this study and encourage sites to continue to send referrals. We are letting potential subjects know that we are not currently able to schedule their study visit, but are adding them to a growing list of study visits to be scheduled once we are able to secure funding.

In the interim, we are hoping to secure funds that will allow us to continue our very successful autopsy program. We have nearly 200 pre-planned autopsies and hope to be able to honor these plans. We are not, however, planning any new autopsies at this time.

We are still performing analyses of the PROGENI sample and we are pleased to announce that another publication from the PROGENI Study is now in print. 'Parkin dosage mutations have greater pathogenicity in familial PD than simple sequence mutations' was published in *Neurology* (2009 Jul 28;73(4):279-86). In addition, a second manuscript, 'Alpha-Synuclein and Familial Parkinson's Disease' was published recently in *Movement Disorders* (24 (8); 1125-1131, 2009). An additional manuscript describing results of a GWAS completed to identify genes contributing to age of onset is currently in press at BMC Medical Genetics.

PramiBID by *Alice Rudolph*

Karl Kieburtz, the study PI, held a conference call with **PramiBID** subjects on September 25th to share the primary study results with them and to answer their questions. Each site notified their subjects of the opportunity and provided them the dial-in information. Approximately 70 (of 311) subjects and/or family members participated in this informative and well-received activity. The study abstract entitled "A randomized, controlled trial of twice daily pramipexole in early PD" (Abstract 508 Poster Session 2 12/15/09 10:15a-4:45p) has been accepted for poster presentation at the December 2009 XVIII WFN World Congress on Parkinson's Disease and Related Disorders in Miami Beach. Boehringer-Ingelheim (BI) anticipates having a public announcement about the study to coincide with the presentation of the abstract. BI is currently working with clinicaltrials.gov to post the study results in that

Registry (#NCT00402233). In addition, Investigators, Coordinators, Steering Committee, and Sponsor are currently reviewing the final draft of the primary manuscript, and submission to a journal is expected shortly. In summary, in the PramiBID study twice daily pramipexole was of comparable efficacy and safety to three times daily, as a treatment for early PD. Total daily dosages of 1.0 and 1.5 mg had similar efficacy and safety profiles. The dedication and involvement of all the PramiBID site staff and subjects have been much appreciated and are gratefully acknowledged here by the Steering Committee and Clinical Trials Coordination Center.

APLIED by *Emily Flagg*

APLIED (A Randomized Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled Study to Assess the Efficacy and Safety of the Three Doses of Aplindore MR (1, 3 and 6 mg Twice Daily) in Patients with Early Parkinson Disease), sponsored by Neurogen Corporation, was conducted to determine how effective the investigational drug aplindore would be compared to placebo in patients with early Parkinson's disease. Thirty-nine PSG study centers in the United States participated in the APLIED study; however, the study was stopped by the sponsor in August 2009 for business reasons. As such, there were only 9 research participants enrolled. There were no safety concerns or significant adverse events reported and we are currently analyzing the data collected from the 9 subjects randomized to study drug.

PDtrials!

PDtrials has a resource that you may find to be a useful tool for people with Parkinson's who participate in studies at your research site. ***Participating in Parkinson's Clinical Research: Questions to Ask***, is a publication that provides people with Parkinson's and others interested in clinical study participation with an extensive list of questions to ask to help ensure that they are educated and informed throughout the clinical research process. This publication was created by the Parkinson's Disease Foundation (PDF) in collaboration with a group of people with Parkinson's disease. If you would like to order print copies of this resource, please contact Nicole Rabin at (800) 457-6676 or nrabin@pdf.org.

Researcher in the News



Connie Marras, MD, PhD

My interest in movement disorders began with a resident research project – I managed a clinical trial of botulinum toxin for tics that had been designed by Tony Lang. This collaboration led to a fellowship in clinical movement disorders under his supervision in Toronto, following which I trained in epidemiology with Caroline Tanner at the Parkinson's Institute in California. During this period I completed my PhD on 'Prognostic Factors in Parkinson's disease' and I am now back in Toronto as an Assistant Professor in Neurology. I have been fortunate to have been involved with PSG work since the beginning of my fellowship training. My PhD thesis was based on data mining projects using the DATATOP database to study early clinical and demographic features associated with time to disability requiring dopaminergic therapy, changes in health-related quality of life and mortality. This has led naturally to additional studies using the PRECEPT database to either validate these findings or to study changes in PD clinical trial cohort demographics and treatment thresholds in PD clinical trials over time.

Recently, my research work has taken on an exciting new dimension. The discovery at our movement disorders clinic of several PD patients with *LRRK2* G2019S mutations from families with multiple affected members led to a detailed study of the clinical phenotype of *LRRK2*-associated PD as well as neurological features in 'unaffected' mutation carriers. This project was led by Tony Lang and me in collaboration with Drs. Langston and Schuele at the Parkinson's Institute and Dr. Munhoz in Curitiba, Brazil and was enabled by a PSG Mentored Clinical Research Award (2005)

funded by the Parkinson's Disease Foundation (PDF) and subsequently funded by the National Parkinson Foundation. From this experience we realized that no single group or even a small number of groups would be able to answer the questions related to the determinants of penetrance and expressivity of these mutations, particularly as they pertain to environmental factors. Thus, in collaboration with Caroline Tanner and Bill Langston we began to develop an international consortium of groups involved in research with *LRRK2* variants, with a primary goal of studying environmental determinants of penetrance and expressivity. Start-up funds for this project were provided by a grant from the PDF to the PSG, awarded to me, Tony Lang and Carlie Tanner and subsequently by a grant from the Brin Foundation to Bill Langston. This is now the *LRRK2* PD GEM (PD Genetic and Environmental Modifiers) consortium, which involves 36 collaborating sites with representation on all continents. Combined, the sites have identified over 1200 individuals with PD and disease-associated *LRRK2* genetic variations. We will use a detailed risk factor instrument in addition to neurological examinations in these individuals and their first degree relatives to address environmental hypotheses regarding penetrance and expressivity. In addition, many sites plan to contribute genetic data and/or DNA to study genetic modifiers as well as gene-environment interactions. We hope to use the PSG as a mechanism for recruiting additional centres that have identified *LRRK2* mutation carriers as we continue to expand the consortium and invite new sites to join. We are very excited about this initiative, which is now under review for funding through NIH and which we see as an unprecedented opportunity to gain insight into not only *LRRK2*-associated PD but also idiopathic PD.

Connie Marras is an Assistant Professor of Neurology at the University of Toronto. Connie serves on the PSG Scientific Review Committee and recently became Chair of the PSG Genetics/Environmental Risk Working Group.

Kudos to Sites!

Kudos go to...

The Quebec Memory & Motor Skills Disorders Research Center (Clinique Sainte-Anne), Laval University Medicine and Neuroscience Department, Quebec City, Canada

...for QE3 highest enrollment - 17 study patients!

by Ginette Robitaille and Louise Bond

Our Movement Disorders Center is fortunate to have a large population to recruit from and more importantly a group of referring general practitioners who do not medically overexpose patients prior to referral. P.I. Dr Emmanuelle Pourcher, a student of Professor André Barbeau and Professor Yves Agid, has, to that effect, been personally involved in training several groups of physicians in the Province of Quebec over the last 15 years or so in providing the right type of care and medication to Parkinsonians and their families.



Dr. Emmanuelle Pourcher at her Quebec City outpatient Movement Disorders clinic (Clinique Sainte-Anne)

For many years now we have also provided free transportation for research patients from outside Quebec City. This helps us quite a bit in recruiting and keeping patients from remote areas of the Province of Quebec.

Last but not least, the Center regroups a very dedicated and motivated clinical and research team all working together to improve the life of our Parkinson's disease patients.



Louise Bond, coordinator (far left), a research patient from L'Île-aux-Coudres, Dr. Emmanuelle Pourcher and Ginette Robitaille, coordinator (far right)

Kudos to these QE3 sites for high enrollment of 12 or more!...

NeuroHealth Parkinson's Disease Movement Disorders Center, RI

Joseph Friedman, Investigator, Rhonda Agramonte and Meg Lannon, Coordinators *by Meg Lannon*

Dr. Friedman is the only Movement Disorder Specialist in Rhode Island, and they always get high numbers of patients who are newly-diagnosed. We are high enrollers in de novo trials like QE3 by virtue of this fact. Enrolled 12 study patients.

Rush University Medical Center, IL

Katie Kompoliti, Investigator, Lucia Blasucci and Jeana Jaglin, Coordinators *by Lucia Blasucci*

We use our media relations department to provide general awareness in the Chicago community that we are doing this study. This resulted in an interview for Dr. Kompoliti, which generated a lot of interest. We then developed a method whereby patients interested in research could call in, and I talk with them about their interest. I then arrange an expedited appointment with our faculty for evaluation. If they are a candidate, they are recruited. I think it is the personal touch that helped us be so successful. This may not work for all centers, but has been helpful to us. Enrolled 12 study patients with 2 screenings to enroll soon.

Columbia University Medical Center, NY

Cheryl Waters, Investigator, Ani Arkun and Angel Figueroa, Coordinators. Enrolled 14 study patients.

London Health Sciences, Canada

Mandar Jog, Investigator and Linda Cole, Coordinator. Enrolled 12 study patients.

Committee News...

Credentials Committee

The Credentials Committee has credentialed 10 new investigators to the PSG since last report, 2 of which marked the PSG site map with the first and only site in Utah. Three credentialed investigators moved to new sites and were approved as PSG sites.

Mark Baron, MD, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA

Brandon Barton, MD, Rush University, Chicago, IL

Michelle Burack, MD, PhD, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY

Barbara K. Changizi, MD, Albany Medical College, Albany, NY

Matthew Menza, MD, RWJ Medical School, Piscataway, NJ

David Shprecher, DO, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT

Lauren Schrock, MD, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT

Vicki Segro, MSN, C-ANP, Colorado Neurological Institute, Englewood, CO

Valerie Suski, DO, U of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Pittsburgh, PA

S. Elizabeth Zauber, MD, Indiana University School of Medicine, Indianapolis, IN

PSG investigators at new approved PSG sites:

Sentara Neurology Specialists, Virginia Beach, VA, Karen Thomas, DO

Neurosciences Institute at Central DuPage Hospital, Winfield, IL, Michael Rezak, MD, PhD

Samuel S. Stratton VA Medical Center, Albany, NY, Donald Higgins, Jr., MD

You must be credentialed in order to participate in PSG studies. **If you are a PSG credentialed investigator and move to a non-PSG site, that site must be reviewed by the PSG Credentials Committee.** The Credentials Committee reviews applications about 4 times per year. The next meeting of the committee will be January/February 2010. Anyone interested in becoming a credentialed PSG investigator can contact Donna Moszkowicz (donna.moszkowicz@ctcc.rochester.edu).

You do not have to be credentialed to become a PSG member. You can join a Working Group. There are 6 to choose from: Cognitive/Psychiatric, Biomarkers, Genetics/Environmental Risk, Other Non-Motor Features of PD, Functional Neurosurgical and Classic Motor. PSG members will be able to attend working group meetings at the annual meeting. If you are interested in joining a working group, contact Roseanna at roseanna.battista@ctcc.rochester.edu.

Scientific Review Committee

The SRC recently awarded a \$13,200 grant to **Xuemei Huang, MD, PhD**, Associate Professor of Neurology at Penn State Hershey Medical Center, for her data-mining project entitled **“Serum cholesterol level as a predictor of progression in PD”**. She proposes to use the DATATOP and PRECEPT study data to assess the hypothesis that lower plasma cholesterol is associated with a faster rate of progression of PD. The results from this data-mining project will be pilot data to submit an NIH application (RO1 or program project section) within a year.

The PSG regularly reviews research project proposals to be conducted by PSG investigators or other investigators in collaboration with PSG investigators. The scope of new projects can be either observational or interventional. **The next deadline for submissions is December 1, 2009.** The RFP is posted on the PSG web site for more information.

Nominating Committee

Janis Miyasaki will chair the 2010 Nominating Committee and the following PSG members have been appointed to serve on the committee: Jeana Jaglin of Rush University, Ranjit Ranawaya of University of Calgary, Melissa Nirenberg of Weill Medical College of Cornell University, and Melissa Gerstenhaber of Johns Hopkins. They will be working with the membership to elect one investigator and one coordinator member to the Executive Committee as Janis and Jeana are rotating off in May 2010.

Mentoring Committee

Request for proposals for the **Mentored Clinical Research Award** is now open. The submission deadline is Friday, **March 26, 2010**. This is an excellent opportunity for new investigators to support a one year project in patient oriented research in PD under the mentorship of an experienced investigator. Please visit the PSG web site for further RFP details at www.parkinson-study-group.org.

The Mentoring Committee is also planning a forum for early career investigators at the AAN in Toronto, April 2010. This forum is in the process of being planned, so stay tuned for further information!

Calendar of Events

December 13-16, 2009

WFN XVIII World Congress on PD and Related Disorders, Miami, Florida USA. More information is on line at: www2.kenes.com/parkinson/Pages/Home.aspx or email parkinson@kenes.com.

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

Parkinson's Action Network, 16th Annual Research & Public Policy Forum - a day of education and advocacy. To register, visit www.thepanforum.org.

Monday, April 12, 2010

PSG Mentoring Committee is hosting a New Investigators Forum in Toronto, Canada as an affiliate meeting of the AAN Annual Meeting. More details coming soon.

Thursday, May 13-Friday, May 14, 2010

PSG 22nd ANNUAL MEETING, Four Seasons, Irving, Texas. **Save the Date!** Contact Donna Moszkowicz for more information at: donna.moszkowicz@ctcc.rochester.edu.

Saturday, May 15, 2010

24th ANNUAL PSG SYMPOSIUM on PD and Other Movement Disorders, at PSG Annual Meeting, Irving, Texas. More information and a Call for Abstracts form is available on the PSG web site at: www.parkinson-study-group.org.

September 28-October 1, 2010

WORLD PARKINSON CONGRESS, Glasgow, Scotland. Learn more at: www.worldpdcongress.org or contact Elizabeth "Eli" Pollard, Congress Manager, at info@worldcongress.org. PSG is proud to be an organizational partner of this event.



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PSG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Michael Schwarzschild, MD, PhD
Caroline Tanner, MD, PhD
Frederick Wooten, MD

Ex-officio:

Roseanna Battista, BS
Donna Moszkowicz
Karen Rabinowitz, JD

Comments? Questions?

Please let us know...your comments and questions will be kept confidential. We also welcome your feedback on the newsletter and your ideas for topics for future newsletters.

Please send all correspondence to Roseanna Battista, roseanna.battista@ctcc.rochester.edu or contact Karl Kieburtz at karl.kieburtz@ctcc.rochester.edu or Karen Marder at ksm1@columbia.edu.

The Parkinson Study Group (PSG) is a non-profit, cooperative group of Parkinson's disease experts from medical centers in the United States and Canada who are dedicated to improving treatment for persons affected by Parkinson's disease.