

Arthritis

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**Incorporating
Osteoporosis
ACT**

NEWSLETTER March 2009

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*Something can be done ...
and we're
doing it !*

Arthritis ACT Board 2008-09

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From the CEO

I have been writing this article, at least formulating it in my mind, during the breaks at a Rheumatology conference that Monte and I have been attending in Sydney. I was quite surprised to be invited as this conference is certainly focused on the education of Rheumatologists and their practice nurses; hence there was a great deal that went sailing way above my simple brain. It was amusing to note that a number of the Doctors said that some of the content was above their head as well, making me feel a little better.

However, there were a number of snippets that I did learn, that I thought you may like to hear about, much of which you may already know, but worth mentioning none the less. By the way the theme of the conference related to the advancement of Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) drugs.

The first bolt to my consciousness was how incredibly complex RA is. The Rheumatology specialty has only been around for a relatively small number of years and the advances in this time have been amazing. It was only during the mid 19th century when the term RA was used for the first time.

The second point of wonder was how uniquely the condition affects the individual, making the treatment all that much more complicated and thirdly how much research and effort is being channeled into treatment options.

There has been a shift in the past 5 years or so in the treatment styles from virtual dependence on the anti-inflammatory range of drugs to a combination of anti-inflammatory and biological products. These new drugs are designed to target individual cells or cell groups, with the aim of bringing the condition into remission.

The feeling I had at the end of the conference was that there is hope for the future and that there are many passionate and dedicated people all over the world working together to find therapies to improve the outcome for RA patients.

After being in my role for nearly six months now I have had the pleasure of meeting quite a few members and visiting an array of activities. It has also been my pleasure to speak to quite a few folk who have shared some of their life journey with me. I am hoping to develop a feature in a couple of our newsletters each year to introduce a member to you. I hope these little vignettes will be encouraging and uplifting and most importantly give you motivation to keep progressing on your wellness journey.

Included with this edition of the newsletter, for your information, is a new brochure that has recently produced. This has been designed to be used at funeral Homes, special events and any other opportunity that is appropriate. We were aware that we did not have a suitable vehicle to

allow people to make a donation. We hope that it will be a successful tool for this purpose.

Please feel free to pass this on as you see fit and we would of course be happy to provide you with more copies if required.

Finally, the Board has asked me to be diligent in seeking to focus on articles in our newsletters which are informative and current, based on your survey feedback forms from last year. In this respect I do hope that you find this issue worthwhile. As always, if you have

suggestions, comments or just want to have a chat please feel free to contact me via my mobile 0417 575 537 or email at tony.holland@arthritisact.org.au

**Best wishes,
Tony Holland**

Education News

Arthritis Awareness Week 29 March to 4 April

We are actively preparing for Arthritis Awareness Week. We hope to be delivering presentations to ACT Health and the ACT Legislative Assembly. We will be working a display stall in the Woden Plaza Shopping Centre one day and the official launch by Arthritis ACT patron and Federal MP Annette Ellis will be held at the Croquet Club.

Warm Water Exercise Program

The expanding WWX program is keeping Shirley Syme, our WWX Supervisor Coordinator busy. We have been notified that Simply Wellness in Belconnen has changed ownership and is now called Club MMM! Day Spa. MMM! is pronounced like the sound you make when you taste something really yummy. Due to some scheduling difficulties at Club MMM! the Saturday session has changed from 1:30pm – 2:30pm to 2:00pm – 3:00pm effective immediately.

Introductory WWX “Strength and Balance” workshops will be conducted in April as part of a Falls and Balance Grant from ACT Health. They will be run by a

physiotherapist and aim to instruct attendees on general overall strengthening and balance improvement exercises. The dates and sessions are as follows:

Wednesday 15 April,
12.30-1.30pm, Club MMM! Day Spa

Thursday 16 April,
7.15-8.30am, Canberra Hospital

Friday 17 April,
5-6pm, Canberra Hospital

Tuesday 28 April,
12.30 - 1.30pm, Black Mountain School

We have limited space for these workshops so WWX members are asked to register by calling the office on 6288 4244. If this is your regular attended session and you do not want to participate in the workshop, also please let us know so we do not overbook the pool.

As an extension of the Strength and Balance workshops, the physiotherapist will also train a few volunteers to be Strength and Balance session facilitators. Following their training, we hope to run some trial guided Strength and Balance sessions. We have space available in the Strength and Balance session facilitator training.

If you are interested in training to be a WWX session facilitator, contact Shirley through our office. No experience is necessary.

The next round of CPR training for supervisors will be held on 4 April at the Canberra Hospital. Contact Shirley on 6288 4244 to register. We also need more WWX members who would be willing to fill a supervisor’s or backup supervisor role.

The Canberra Hospital pool will be open for all the WWX sessions over Easter.

Self Management Course

There is still time to enrol in the *Living a Healthy Life with Long Term Conditions* course. This course offers practical and well tested ways of coping with the problems we experience due to our arthritis. It not only provides information but helps you develop your abilities and confidence in managing your arthritis. Dates are:

Wednesdays, March 11, 18, 24,
April 1, 8, 14

Time 10—12.30pm.

Venue: Grant Cameron Community Centre, Ground Floor Conference Rm.

Registration: Call Arthritis ACT 6288 4244.

Education news continued

Community Talks

Barbara Gillies, the Community Talks coordinator, is aiming to increase our outreach and she has the program off to a fast and furious start with numerous requests for 2009 already received. There is considerable interest already in our newly developed presentation *Keeping Mobile with Arthritis and Osteoporosis*.

Public interest in arthritis and osteoporosis is generating more demand for our Community Talks. We would like to accommodate as many of the requests as possible but we are stretching the limits of the few presenters that we have.

If you would like to make a contribution to increased awareness of musculoskeletal conditions in the community we are offering an eight-hour over two days training course in April. No experience or extensive knowledge is required. Please contact us for more information.

Multicultural Festival

We fronted a booth at the Multicultural Festival on Sunday 8 February. All of our multilingual information was available and the day was successful despite the heat wave temperatures. Thank you to the volunteers who assisted.

Joint Replacement Seminar

A Joint Replacement Seminar will present surgical options for the shoulder, wrist and hand on 31 March. See the ad elsewhere in this newsletter.

National Science Festival

With support from Osteoporosis Australia and Arthritis NSW, we will be holding a display booth and delivering cooking demonstrations at the National Science Festival. The focus will be on healthy diet for bone strength and development.

Falls Prevention Project

The ACT Health "Stay on Your Feet – Falls Prevention" Promotion

Grant project is aimed at incorporating a falls prevention message into all of our member and outreach services. In addition to incorporating the falls prevention message into our standard Arthritis and Osteoporosis Community Talks, we have developed a new Community Talk called *Keeping Mobile with Arthritis and Osteoporosis* as discussed above. We have also developed an information sheet on arthritis and falls that is currently being reviewed by ACT Health.

Also as part of this project we hope to expand our WWX program to incorporate an additional exercise component that can benefit individuals at risk of falls. This will be initiated by strength and balance workshops and, if successful, we hope to hold ongoing facilitated WWX exercise sessions. See the WWX section above.

Monte Scharbow
Educator

Challenging Pain Course Update

You will recall a mention in the December newsletter about this course which has been on the boil now for quite some time. It has been unfortunate that this has taken so long to work through, although it appears that we are now able to proceed.

We have a list of around 30 people who have expressed an inter-

est in being involved in the pilot course, although if you are unsure if your name is on the list or if you would like to express a new interest please make contact with us at your earliest convenience, by phone 6288 4244 or email info@arthritisact.org.au

We will be holding two pilot courses consisting of two 2.5 hour

sessions over a two week period. We anticipate that these pilots will be conducted in late April.

If you have expressed an interest, someone will contact you by telephone in the next few weeks to determine if you are still keen to proceed and to give you the dates and times.

Fundraising News

Bulb Drive

The Bulb Drive is an opportunity to beautify your gardens for spring using drought tolerant Tesselaar bulbs and at the same time help us raise funds for the Foundation. We retain 45% of the profits and over the last couple of years have been able to boost our funds significantly.

The catalogue is enclosed. **Orders due** back in the office by **1st April** and will be available for collection from the office about the 20th April. Payment should be made out to Arthritis ACT or phone the office for credit card payment

Entertainment Books

We have the ever popular Entertainment Book for sale at \$50, p&h\$10. The books will be available from the end of March, pre-order your copy now as they sell fast. They provide an excellent gift for birthdays, or for other special occasions.

Austrian Concert

This concert will again be held at the Austrian Australia Club, Heard Street, Mawson at 1.30pm on Sunday 21st June. Mark this in your diary now!

Fyshwick Stall -

Sunday 18th October

Please note there will be only One Stall this year

We need items such as books, bric a brac, jewellery, crockery etc in good condition for the stall. Maureen Britt on 6281 1967 is able to provide limited storage of goods, if you are doing an autumn clean up.

We are **unable to accept** - plants, shoes, clothing or electrical goods.



National Prescribing Service Limited

New medicines recently added to the Pharmaceutical Benefits scheme (PBS) for osteoporosis and pain relief are reviewed in the latest edition of [Medicine Update](#).

[Medicine Update](#) is an online publication produced by [National Prescribing Service](#), designed to be used by consumers who are considering new medicines. It aims to highlight important information about how the medicine is used in therapy, how it compares with other therapies, provides any important safety information and explains the conditions of its listing on the PBS.

In the December issue, *Medicine Update* considers the benefits of zoledronic acid (Aclasta), a once-a-day bisphosphonate treatment for osteoporosis and Tramadol (Durotram XR), a new once-a-day form of an existing pain relief medicine.

For more information, see the "Medicines Update" column in this newsletter and the full articles available at www.nps.org.au/consumers/publications/medicine_update

Exercise No Danger for Joints

Non-Elite Level Activity Does Not Increase Risk of Osteoarthritis

There is no good evidence supporting a harmful effect of exercise on joints in the setting of normal joints and regular exercise, according to a review of studies published in this month's issue of the *Journal of Anatomy*.

Exercise is an extremely popular leisure-time activity in many countries throughout the Western world and has for many become part of the modern lifestyle.

It is widely promoted in as being beneficial for weight control, disease management in cardiovascular disease and diabetes, and for improving psychological well-being amongst an array of other benefits.

In contrast, however, the lay press and community perception is also that exercise is potentially deleterious to one's joints, in particular those of the lower extremities.

Researchers from Boston, USA, and Airing, Germany, reviewed existing studies on the relationship between regular exercise and osteoarthritis (OA) and concluded that in the absence of existing joint injury there is no increased risk of OA from exercise. "We found that in elite athletes where there was more likelihood of obtaining sports injuries, there was an increased risk of OA in the damaged joints, but in most people vigorous, low-impact exercise is beneficial for both its physical and mental benefits," said lead researcher David Hunter MD PhD, New England Baptist Hospital.

"The largest modifiable risk factor for knee OA is body weight, such that each additional kilogram of body mass increases the compressive load over the knee by roughly 4kg".

One might surmise therefore that exercise to reduce body-weight, where necessary, could in fact reduce the risk of OA, rather than increase it.

The knee is the joint most commonly affected by the symptoms of osteoarthritis. More than 10 million Americans suffer from knee osteoarthritis, the most common cause of disability in the United States and women are more commonly affected than men.

More information is at www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/121645788/abstract

News in Brief

New Injections for Osteoarthritis.

An injection to stabilise knees affected by osteoarthritis is being developed in Germany. The injections are made of proteins that have been taken from the persons blood, then modified and injected into the affected joint to stop the inflammation and damage of the cartilage.

Researchers compared people who had been treated with the new injections with those treated by other methods. The results from the study of 310 people with chronic knee pain showed the process to be safe and effective, with 6 of 10 people experiencing much less pain and more mobility two years later. They

They also need less surgery or other treatment than those not receiving the injections. This provided long term relief from pain and joint dysfunction more effectively than comparable treatments said Professor Peter Wehling, an orthopaedic surgeon who helped develop the new treatment. The research was published in the journal *Osteoarthritis and Cartilage*.

Osteoporosis risk from stomach protectors

Canadian researchers have noticed that people taking drugs called proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) for more than five years have a higher risk of hip and bone fractures. PPIs are usually pre-

50, who had fractured hip, spine or wrist due to Osteoporosis. The fracture rates were higher than a similar group of people who were not taking PPIs. The risk increased further, especially for hip fractures, if PPIs were used for more than seven years. Short term use for a few months did not appear to increase fracture risk.

Professor Ingvar Bjarnason, gastroenterology expert at King's College London, said the benefits of PPIs far out weighed the risks. PPIs are highly effective and very safe. Taking PPIs with NSAIDs reduces the number of people who have gastric bleeding ulcers by at least half.

The study was printed in the Canadian Medical Association Journal.

News from the office.....

Arthritis Week 6—9 April 2009 —

Are you able to help?

Come to the launch. We are very pleased to have our patron The Hon Annette Ellis officiate at the official opening of Arthritis Awareness Week 2009. The launch takes place at the Canberra Croquet Club on Commonwealth Avenue, Yarralumla. on Tuesday April 7, 12 to 1pm. Its theme is "Sports to Play with Arthritis". You will be able to have a try at croquet after the official launch. Please come along and join in with us as we seek to use this as a community awareness raising event. RSVP to info@arthritisact.org.au or by calling 6288 4244 by 3rd April.

Distribute posters. Each year Arthritis Australia provides us with posters and other information to advertise Arthritis Week. Are you able to help us distribute

this advertising information to venues such as doctors' surgeries, pharmacies, health and community centres? We expect that the posters will be available around mid to late March. We'd love to hear from you if you can help out. Contact the office on 6288 4244.

Coleman Court Christmas Angel 2008

Each year Coleman Court invites applications from the community for their Christmas Angel. The Christmas Angel award is given to a person who, day in and day out seeks to make our community a better place to live.

We are very pleased to inform you that our very own, respected and loved Anna Earnshaw was selected as the angel for 2008, and what a great choice she was. Anna works tirelessly for a number of community organizations and certainly is a great example of a person who seeks to make our community a better place to live.

Congratulations Anna from all your friends at Arthritis ACT. We appreciate your continued involvement with us as a volunteer and know how much you care.

Do you have a Shonky Shoulder or a Wonky Wrist?

Surgical Options for Upper Limb Joint Replacement

Speaker: Dr Katherine Gordiev
When: Tuesday 31 March
Time: 9:30 for 10:00am to 12
Where: Ginninderra Labor Club, Lhotsky St Charnwood
Cost: Gold coin for morning tea
RSVP: Arthritis ACT 6288 4244

Special General Meeting

Notice of Special General Meeting of the Arthritis Foundation of the ACT Incorporated (Inc Osteoporosis ACT)

5.30pm Monday May 4 2009

Ground Floor meeting room, Grant Cameron Community Centre, 27 Mulley St, Holder 2611

Agenda

A resolution to amend the constitution of the Arthritis Foundation of the ACT Incorporated.

A copy of the revised draft constitution is available on the website www.arthritisact.org.au or by phoning 6288 4244 and requesting a copy.

Advertisement

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Medical Marketing

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Medicines Update

Discontinuation of Feldene-D 10mg

Pfizer Australia announced the discontinuation of Feldene-D 10 mg (Piroxicam) tablet. Other presentations of Feldene-D, ie. 20mg tablet, 10mg capsule and 20mg capsule remain available. Alternative brands of piroxicam 10mg tablets are also available.

Zoledronic acid

Zoledronic acid (Aclasta) is a new treatment for osteoporosis that is used only once a year, and is given through a drip into a vein. It is a treatment option for people who may prefer a once a year treatment, or who can't take or tolerate other osteoporosis treatments. Like all treatments for osteoporosis, it has a range of possible side effects - some minor and some serious. Some side effects last for a short time, while others may not go away quickly.

Tramadol

Tramadol is a painkiller prescribed by your doctor. In general, it should not be taken instead of paracetamol or Aspirin without good reason, as it has more side effects.



There are many forms of tramadol. Some are newer than others. It is important that people taking tramadol know how often to take it. Some forms need to be taken every 4 to 8 hours, some are taken twice a day, and one form is taken only once a day.

It is also important to take only one form of tramadol at a time.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 2009

Wednesday 11 “Living a Healthy Life with Long Term Conditions” -
6 week Course
Time: 10.am—12.30 pm
Venue: Grant Cameron Community Centre
Bookings essential

Thursday 12 **Combined Support Group**
Time: 10.30am –12noon
Venue: Grant Cameron Community Centre

Saturday 14 **Young Adults Group**
Venue: Southern Cross Pitch ‘n’Put
Time: 11.30am
Contact: Melany - brandi5@bigpond.com
6238 0674 business hours

Tuesday 17 **Loving Life @ 55+**
Time: 10.00am – 2.00pm
Venue: Tuggeranong Community Centre

National Arthritis Week March 29 - April 4

Tuesday 31 **Joint Replacement Seminar**
Details inside newsletter

April

Wednesday 1 **Return Bulb Orders**

Saturday 4 **WWX Supervisor CPR training**
Venue: Canberra Hospital
Contact: Shirley 62884244 to register

Monday 6 **Arthritis Support Group**
Time: 10.30am –12noon
Venue: Hellenic Club , Phillip

Monday 6 **Fundraising Meeting**
Time: 2.00pm
Venue: Arthritis ACT Office
All Welcome

Tuesday 7 **Arthritis Week Launch**
Time: 12.00noon –1:00pm
Venue: Croquet Club, Commonwealth Avenue

Thursday 9 **RA & Sjogren’s Interest Group**
Time: 10.30am –12noon
Venue: Hellenic Club, Phillip

Tuesday 14 —17 **WWX “Strength & Balance’ Workshops various times and locations .**
Details in education news

Saturday 18 **Young Adults Group**
Venue: National Zoo & Aquarium,
Scrivener Dam
Time: 11.30am

Thursday 19 **Seniors Day**
Time: 9.30am - 3.30 pm
Venue: Old Bus Depot

May

Monday 4 **Fundraising Meeting**
Time: 2.00pm
Venue: Arthritis ACT Office
All Welcome

Saturday 9 **Young Adults Group**
Venue: National Gallery, Parkes Place
Time: 12.30pm

Monday 11 -17 **Law Week - Arthritis ACT the Official Charity**

Thursday 14 **Combined RA & Sjogren’s Interest Group and Arthritis Support Group**
Time: 10.30am –12noon
Venue: Hellenic Club, Phillip

Wednesday 27 - 30 **National Science Festival**
National Convention Centre

June

Monday 1 **Arthritis Support Group**
Time: 10.30am –12noon
Venue: Hellenic Club , Phillip

Monday 1 **Fundraising Meeting**
Time: 2.00pm
Venue: Arthritis ACT Office
All Welcome

Thursday 14 **RA & Sjogren’s Interest Group**
Time: 10.30am –12noon
Venue: Hellenic Club, Phillip

Saturday 13 **Young Adults Group**
Venue: Ten Pin Bowling , Belconnen
Time: 11.30am

Tuesday 30 **Memberships due for renewal**