

PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Dance, yoga, art — all help patients keep moving

BY CRYSTAL CHEW
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When Ralph Polster, 73, sits down, he often shakes his leg.

His wife of 46 years, Barbara, never thought much about it until one day nine years ago when he began rotating his hand. Ralph's primary care doctor told him there was nothing to be worried about, but his wife was not convinced.

"The doctor is wrong," she said. "You have Parkinson's disease."

She took him to a neurologist and after doing an MRI, her suspicions were confirmed.

"It's very difficult to watch a vibrant, productive individual deteriorate," said Barbara of her husband, who gets tired and has lost his confidence to travel.

Parkinson's disease is a progressive, neurological disorder of the nervous system, which kills the neurotransmitter in the brain known as dopamine. It is the second-most-common degenerative disease of the brain, after Alzheimer's. It affects one million people in the United States and an estimated four million to six million worldwide, according to the Parkinson's Disease Foundation.

It causes tremors, slowness of movement and rigidity, and it can also affect cognition, one's emotional health and gastrointestinal functions. The wife of Robin Williams, Susan Schneider, has said the actor was in the early stages of Parkinson's disease at the time of his Aug. 11 death, and was struggling with depression, anxiety and the Parkinson's diagnosis when he died. Schneider has said that he was not ready to share his Parkinson's diagnosis publicly.

"People don't talk about it," said James Morgan, 55, a Miami lawyer who was diagnosed about six years ago. "It's OK to reach out for help because it's a difficult disease with no cure."

Morgan, a partner with Squire Patton Boggs, has made it a priority to spread awareness.

"I see too many people that suffer because they are afraid to talk about it," Morgan said. "You see people's lives change dramatically when they have the resources."

He joined the South Florida advisory board for the Miami-based National Parkinson's Foundation and is currently a walk chairman



CHARLES TRAINOR JR./MIAMI HERALD STAFF

KEEPING FIT: Patient Bob Hand, with the hat, dances with instructor Jeri Beaucaire, right, at a fitness/dance class for Parkinson's patients at Memorial Regional Hospital Fitness Center in Hollywood.

for Moving Day Miami, an annual fundraising event that takes place Oct 5 in Bayfront Park and hopes to raise \$235,000.

Morgan, who was introduced to yoga soon after his diagnosis, also advocates for people to exercise regularly. Numerous studies have demonstrated that physical activity for individuals with Parkinson's has positive effects on muscular strength, balance and quality of life.

"Of all the diseases we see and treat, Parkinson's is absolutely one where you have to stay moving," said Dr. Alan Novick, medical director for the Memorial Rehabilitation Institute in Broward. "The more you stay sedentary, the worse you get."

A fairly new exercise in South Florida that has been shown to alleviate Parkinson's symptoms is dance.

Free dance classes are being offered at Memorial Regional Hospital Fitness Center in the Hollywood and Pembroke Pines locations. The classes began July 29 and plan to continue for at least a year, funded through a \$5,000 grant from the National Parkinson's Foundation.

"It loosens up my muscles. It feels good for a little while after I am through with this," said Bud Krepcho, 68, who has been attending the class since the beginning. "But I have to keep doing it."

Dance for PD at Memorial was inspired by an initiative that started in



DANIEL BOCK/FOR THE MIAMI HERALD

CREATIVE APPROACH: Kendall resident Luis Moran works on a collage during a art-therapy class at St. Matthew the Apostle Episcopal Church in Glenvar Heights.



CHARLES TRAINOR JR./MIAMI HERALD STAFF

KEEP MOVING: Barbara Grosz participates in a fitness/dance class for Parkinson's patients at Memorial Regional Hospital Fitness Center in Hollywood.

Brooklyn in 2001. The founder, Olie Westheimer, thought of how dancers are constantly learning to move, similar to people with Parkinson's.

"Music and rhythm allow people to move more controlled and smooth," said Rob Herzog, the director of fitness and sports medicine at the fitness center in Hollywood. "It has a more-lasting effect throughout the day."

Other classes found to be helpful are yoga, Tai Chi, music and art therapy. All of which are offered by local support groups like South Miami-Dade ParkOptimist. Their classes take place at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, 7410 Sunset Dr.

Joe Glick, 56, a team captain for the group, recommends being part of a support group as it has inspired him to live life to the fullest.

"Everybody who comes in here, comes in with a smile on their face," said Glick, a former trial lawyer who was diagnosed in November 2012.

The group and all the activities have helped him from becoming depressed, but he still worries about his future.

"Unfortunately, they are nowhere near a cure," he said.

Some doctors, however, believe that the future is bright, as much research is being conducted on the disease.

"There are many scientists throughout the world

Resources

For more information about the Parkinson's Disease Foundation, visit pdf.org.

For more information about Dance for PD at Memorial Hospital, visit dancefor-parkinsons.org.

For more information about South Miami-Dade ParkOptimists and their weekly classes and events, call Laura Sastre at 305-537-9929 or visit npfsouthflorida.org.

If you go

What: Moving

Day

Where: Bayfront Park, 301 Biscayne Blvd., Miami.

When: Begins 8:30 a.m. Sunday, Oct 5.

For more information: Call Dreema Stokes at 305-537-9919 or visit movingdaymiami.org

What: Dance for PD

Where: Memorial Regional Hospital Fitness Center, 300 Hollywood Way, Hollywood.

When: 2 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday.

For more information: These classes are free. For more information, call 954-265-5150.

What: Dance for PD

Where: Memorial Hospital West Fitness Center, 701 Flamingo Road, Pembroke Pines.

When: 2 p.m. Wednesday and Saturday.

For more information: These classes are free. For more information, call 954-844-7125.

dedicated to this," said Dr. Carlos Singer, professor of neurology and chief of the movement disorders division at the University of Miami Health System. "The more people you have studying this, the more answers come up."

SLEEP DEPRIVATION

Lack of sleep may lead to vicious cycle of obesity

BY HOWARD COHEN
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Lack of sleep can be causing you to gain weight.

At the same time, weight gain and obesity can lead to sleep deprivation or potentially deadly sleep disorders like obstructive sleep apnea, a problem caused when the muscles in the back of the throat fail to keep the airway open and halt breathing repeatedly during sleep and jolts one out of necessary, restful deep REM sleep.

It's a curious Catch-22 but there are medical reasons for the phenomenon — and remedies.

"There are two big hormones related to weight and sleep," explains Dr. Timothy Grant, medical director at Baptist Sleep Center at Sunset. "One is ghrelin, a hormone that increases your appetite, tells you what to eat. Then there is leptin, and that is associated with satiety, it tells you when you have had enough to eat."

When you are sleep-deprived, these hormones throw your metabolism out of whack. Ghrelin is boosted. Imagine hitting the gas pedal. At the same time, leptin is reduced, akin to removing the stop signs on a road. The combination of

more ghrelin and less leptin means open-throttle at the junk food buffet — or weight gain. The cycle is frustrating and dangerous and impacts adults as well as children.

In addition to obesity and hormonal changes, lack of sleep can increase blood pressure and lead to depression, lethargy, confusion, irritability, heart disease, diabetes, strokes and even cancer, Grant said. Sleep apnea can also spike blood pressure in the daytime and, in extreme cases, be a factor in death, as with actors John Candy (*Uncle Buck*) and Divine (*Hair-spray*), Grateful Dead guitarist Jerry Garcia and NFL Hall of Famer Reggie White.

Sleep-deprived people — estimates suggest that more than 40 million Americans are not getting the recommended seven to eight hours of good sleep a night — can be too tired to exercise during the day to help



ALVIN/MCT

counteract the hormonal changes. These changes physiologically compel them to binge on fatty, salty, "bad" carb foods.

Grant cites the new tag, "social jet lag," which is related to sleep deprivation

and is similar to traveling across time zones that can mess with your internal rhythms.

"What we all do is have one sleep pattern during the

week, and it's different on weekends.

That's classically with teens and college students on weekends who party until 3 a.m. and get up the next day at 2. You can't really make up for it, it really wreaks havoc on your internal system," Grant said.

One recent study by the University of Wisconsin looked at hormone levels linked to sleep deprivation in 1,000 volunteers.

The participants who had less than the recommended eight to nine hours of sleep at night had lower levels of leptin, so they felt less full, and higher levels of ghrelin, so they gained more weight — results that confirmed what

scientists already knew about the detrimental effects of poor sleep.

Grant also cited the school's 2013 study on how sleep deprivation also compels the brain to signal overeating of exactly the kinds of foods — sweets and fatty — that lead to the most weight gain.

For this study, published in the journal *Neuropsychopharmacology*, Wisconsin researchers deprived rats of sleep by having them walk on a treadmill when they normally would be asleep, thus disrupting their regular sleep patterns. Researchers compared the rats with rodents who had the same amount of exercise, but during their regular awake periods, and to hungry rats fed a reduced diet.

Only the sleep-deprived rats showed a strong response in the part of the brain that regulates the effects of natural rewards and abusive drugs. This triggered opioids that "tend to magnify the pleasures of eating junk food, including sweet or high-fat foods," said lead author Dr. Brian Baldo in a University of Wisconsin report. These

• TURN TO WEIGHT, 6HH