

PHI Announces Research Grants for 2011

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Teams from the Departments of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the Hadassah Medical Center, Jerusalem, Israel, and at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, were awarded \$25,000 each from The Research Fund of Post-Polio Health International for research to be conducted in 2011.

Zeev Meiner, MD, will lead the study, "Characteristics of poliomyelitis and post-polio patients among Jews and Arabs in Jerusalem." Demographic, medical, socioeconomic, occupational and functional data will be collected on 250 polio survivors (Jews and Arabs) and will be compared to the age and gender-matched "non-polio" population to determine the extent of post-polio problems and to develop programs to prevent further problems. Dr. Meiner will be assisted by Isabella Schwartz, MD, head of the post-polio clinic established in 1997 at the Hadassah Medical Center.

Survivors in the study will be evaluated according to the March of Dimes criteria, and post-polio syndrome severity will be evaluated according to the IPPS (Index of Post-Polio Sequelae). Fifty survivors will receive group or individual therapy twice a week for six weeks to evaluate the effectiveness of specific rehabilitative therapies. Dr. Meiner's team also includes Irina Gartsmn, MD, (Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation), Yechiel Friedlander, PhD, and Orly Manor, PhD, in the Hebrew University Braun School of Public Health Biostatistics and Epidemiology Department.

Claire Z. Kalpakjian, PhD, MS, is the principal investigator for "The Role of Oral Glutathione in Improvement of Health Outcomes among Persons with Late Effects of Poliomyelitis." The critical role in a number of cellular processes of glutathione, a powerful antioxidant, is suggested, but there is little published data about its effectiveness.

The study conducted at the University of Michigan will examine the effect of oral glutathione supplementation on subjective measures, such as fatigue, physical function, sleep and emotional distress, and on objective measures of physical activity, sleep efficiency and functional mobility. Twenty individuals between the ages of 50 and 65 will have blood drawn on the first and last of four data collection visits to measure glutathione levels. Participants will be recruited from the University of Michigan outpatient clinics and the Michigan Polio Network. Mark J. Ziadeh, MD, Assistant Clinical Professor in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation is co-investigator. ▲

cases, a very light technique is helpful. It can be relaxing and pain relieving and may even be helpful with edema management.

The best technique in these situations is one similar to the Manual Lymph Drainage technique used for lymphedema patients. Starting at the top of the affected limb, using full contact with the palm and fingers of the hand, apply enough pressure only to stretch the skin. Gently pull the skin toward the top of the limb. Then move your hand down a bit on the limb and repeat, working your way down to the end of the limb. This technique is helpful with multiple types of swelling, and has been very successful in

reducing hypersensitivity. If you struggle with either of these issues, I would recommend getting a referral to a lymphedema therapist or seeing a massage therapist who is trained in lymphedema management. They can teach you and your partner exactly what to do. It is very easy to learn, but it is a little different for each person.

If the skin is very fragile or there is an open wound on the limb in question, use caution. Keep the skin well moisturized, and never apply direct pressure over the site of a wound. However very light massage over areas of intact skin can still be performed. Simple, light stroking of the skin without any application of pressure, or the

lymphedema technique described above can be used safely.

If you have diabetic neuropathy, you must keep in mind that your sensation is altered. You may not be able to accurately assess whether the amount of pressure during a massage is okay. Light to moderate pressure is best to avoid any soft tissue damage.

Don't be afraid to seek professional advice! If you have any concerns or struggle with any of the specific issues listed above, one or two visits with a professional for instruction on the correct massage method for you may be well worth it. ▲