

Pain and Parkinson's; a Workshop

We had not expected arctic conditions when we set a mid-March date for this topic, so our planned attendance of 40 was reduced to 25 brave types who struggled through the snow to join us. We were very grateful to the speakers who also made such an effort to be there. A big thank you also to Mo Morgan and Wendy Carle Taylor who attended and whose dance and singing activities help many of us stay active and able to be understood, as well as raising our spirits.

A thoughtful introduction to the topic of pain by Werner Remmele was followed by an agreed plan for the day from Sheila Edward, who has been in overall charge of this Seminar. We are fortunate to have such an expert volunteer. Werner and Sheila were joined by Marian McIntyre for a lively discussion led from the floor and with the help of Parky, our man-sized poster, we mapped out the commonest locations of pain, from headaches to scrunched up toes. It was highly informative to hear about members' experience of pain and other difficulties associated with PD, and to learn how people had either reduced or removed their pain with various techniques. Slow exercise such as pilates, yoga and Tai Chi are popular, as are the more vigorous activities such as cycling, dancing and swimming. Bed socks and a Gin and Tonic were also recommended! It was an excellent interactive session and the speakers had a good look at Parky and the flip chart notes over the lunch break. We trust that the information will provide them with further food for thought.

Then Dr Davenport spoke on "Pain in Parkinson's Disease: why it matters and why we ignore it "It matters because it helps to diagnose an ailment and we ignore it if the descriptions are too fuzzy to be useful. Fiona MacPherson, specialist in chronic pain, talked of the "assessment and management of pain" and Alison Stewart asked "Where do we go from here?". All three presentations will be made available through our web page www.edinburghparkinsons.org.

If we run another workshop on this topic, we promise to do so in a warmer month!