Dear WPC friends,

I always love to think about our friends around the world on these hot, sticky days in New York City and remember that half the world is entering winter and donning their coats and hats as we in the north experience summer and long days. While we all experience the month of July, our experiences, like Parkinson's, vary greatly depending where we live and where we are in life. Yet, our 'commonness' is still stronger than our differences and this is what I like to focus on in life.

David Leventhal recently wrote for the WPC Blog about his trip to China where he taught Dance for PD to trainers and people with PD. He was surprised that there were no coordinated exercise classes for PwP since China is so known for tai chi and community exercise right in the middle of the town parks. One dancer told him that his class "gave us a great sense of happiness and dignity." Teaching people with Parkinson's skills for self-care is valuable wherever one lives, and dance is part of self-care along with other kinds of exercise and wellness. I learned from Sara Riggare, our Advocates Committee Co-chair, that the average person with Parkinson's spends one hour with their doctor each year, but spends 8,765 hours on their own, taking care of themselves. This is the same globally and people with Parkinson's have, for many years, figured out how to engage in 'self-care' when they aren't seeing their doctor. How do you engage in self-care? If you are a doctor or health professional, how do you talk with your patients about self-care? We want to hear how you engage in self-care or how you encourage your patients to engage in self-care. Email us your self-care regimen!

While PwP and families are focusing self care, researchers around the world are striving to find answers and better treatments. It's such an exciting time for Parkinson's with researchers like Andrew B. West, PhD at University of Alabama and Ignacio Mata at University of Washington. West just wrote on the WPC Blog about the excitement and challenges of LRRK2 and finding disease modifying therapies for Parkinson's and Mata, whose piece is highlighted below, wrote about the need for increasing diversity in genetics studies of Parkinson's with a focus on his work on the Latin American Research Consortium on the Genetics of PD (LARGE-PD). These
junior researchers are part of the future of Parkinson's and we applaud them for their commitment to understanding Parkinson's and to helping us get closer to a cure.

For those of you in the heat of the summer, stay cool, and for our friends who are experiencing the chill of winter, stay warm. Wherever you are on the planet, start thinking about how you can be a part of the WPC 2019. Perhaps you can start by building a delegation from your town or country. Build a group of like minded people and start thinking about how to get the delegation funded to attend the WPC 2019. It may be a delegation of three, but that's something and we want to see the world represented in Kyoto, and that starts with YOU.

See you in Kyoto in June 2019!

Kind regards,

Eli

A Look Back at WPC 2016: Nutrition and PD

Heather Zwickey, PhD from the National College of Natural Medicine gave two presentations on Nutrition. In her talks she outlined what types of food can influence specific symptoms. She explains that nutrition influences neuronal health, systemic inflammation, oxidative stress and blood health, which are all areas that are negatively impacted by Parkinson’s. When using nutrition to battle Parkinson’s the strategy is to increase 'brain food,' decrease inflammation, and decrease chemicals. In her slides, Dr. Zwickey recommends foods to eat for particular symptoms.

Bradykinesia (slowness) can be lessened by eating foods with Anthocyanin. (Blueberries, cranberries, bilberries, raspberries, blackberries, black Currents, cherries, the peels of eggplants, black rice, concord grapes, muscadine grapes, red cabbage, and violet petals.) Anthocyanins have been shown to reduce inflammation, oxidative stress, and protect nervous tissue in animal models. Foods containing selenium such as Brazil nuts, crab, poultry, and fish also reduce oxidative stress.
Gait: Dr. Zwickey referenced a study by Scheperjans in 2015 that reduced levels of specific bacteria in the gut of people with PD is positively correlated with the severity of gait instability. To protect these bacteria in the gut avoid probiotics and eat proteins. Proteins can be found in nuts, seeds, and vegetables as well as meat.

Dementia, Cognitive Impairment, Depression, Anxiety, Pain and Fatigue can all be caused or worsened by inflammation. Inflammatory foods include anything with high fructose corn syrup, sugar, and trans-fat. Vitamins that combat inflammation include vitamin A, C, and D. The best foods to eat are nuts, berries, vegetables, and fish.

Overall, by choosing the right foods people with Parkinson’s can improve their symptoms. Nutrition should be an essential part of the care plan for people with Parkinson’s.

VIEW THE SLIDES FROM HEATHER ZWICKEY’S PRESENTATION HERE

WPC Blog Highlight:

Bringing down the barriers: The Latin American Research consortium on the Genetics of Parkinson’s Disease (LARGE-PD)

Derribando barreras: El Consorcio Latinoamericano para la investigación genética de la enfermedad de Parkinson (LARGE-PD)

The following is an excerpt form Dr. Ignacio Mata's post for the WPC Blog written in English and Spanish.
There is no question that since the human genome was fully sequenced in 2003, genetic studies have allowed huge advances in the understanding of complex diseases. These studies have identified many genes that harbor both causal and risk-modifying variants, which has improved our understanding of a wide variety of disorders. However, a major shortcoming of this work is the limited diversity of the study populations. By 2016 the overall proportion of non-European derived participants in large genetic studies was only 19%, and representation from some groups such as Latinos remained below 1%. This Eurocentric approach will without a doubt widen disparities in research and health.

Unfortunately, these patterns also hold true for genetic studies of Parkinson’s disease (PD) where inclusion of Latinos has been and remains particularly low, despite the fact that the risk for developing the disease has been suggested to be elevated in Latinos living in the US. To address this lack of diversity and understand the risk factors that may be increasing the risk of PD in Latinos we have, over the past decade, created the Latin American Research Consortium on the Genetics of PD (LARGE-PD). LARGE-PD is a rapidly-expanding collaboration between our group in Seattle and investigators currently at nine institutions in six countries across South America (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay). Each site uses uniform diagnostic criteria and collects a standardized set of clinical and demographic variables. The initial goal of the project was to generate the first large PD case-control sample of Latinos. Thanks to funding from the Parkinson’s Disease Foundation to date we have enrolled nearly 4,000 individuals. This cohort provides a unique resource for genetic analysis in previously understudied populations.

We have started to study this cohort and what we have seen so far is that some of the most common PD-associated variants discovered in populations of European origin occur at a substantially lower frequency in Latin America and there are novel variants in those same genes that
are common in patients from certain populations in these countries. Thus the genetic architecture of PD might differ between Latinos and other population groups.
If you follow us on social media, you have seen a lot of our favorite fuzzy friend. You may not realize this, but our little raccoon makes a huge impact. One hundred percent of the profits from the sale of each Parky the Raccoon go to the WPC Travel Grant fund. Over the past two years Parky has raised over $10,000 to help people with Parkinson's, medical professionals from low income countries, and young clinicians and researchers attend the WPC! Who knew that a

It was at the 3rd World Parkinson Congress in Montreal where Parky came to life as the WPC mascot. Parky now resides with humans all around the world. See the map!

Why a Raccoon?

1. The distinctive mask, represents the "Parkinson's mask."
raccoon could be so effective at bringing the Parkinson's community together?

Parky the Raccoon was born in the summer of 2012 when Bob Kuhn, ambassador for the 3rd World Parkinson Congress and person with Parkinson's, decided to create a companion for his around the world trip. Bob's 70 day trip was designed to help him connect with people around the world who lived with PD or cared for someone with PD. He created a cardboard cutout of Parky the Raccoon to spark conversations. Everyone was curious about this unique little animal, indigenous to North America, but virtually unknown to the rest of the world.

2. Raccoons are inventive when faced with challenges. Excellent problem solvers, with a high level of curiosity, and the ability to survive in diverse environments, quite similar to people with Parkinson's who creatively solve the challenges of living with PD.

3. Parkinson's affects sleep and raccoons are often nocturnal, but not exclusively so.

4. They can be mischievous. After all, Parkinson's is serious enough in itself. It's good to have a little fun.

SHARE YOUR PICTURE OF PARKY

BRING HOME PARKY THE RACCOON AND SUPPORT THE WPC TRAVEL GRANT FUND

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