Dear WPC friends,

The WPC Program Committee is working hard to generate a phenomenal program for the WPC 2019. They have been working for all of 2017 and by early 2018, a solid program with detailed topics will be outlined and ready to share. I am confident that when you see the program outline, internationally renowned speakers, and exciting breath of topics, you will quickly make sure the WPC 2019 is on your calendar for 2019.

WPC has had an exciting start to the month by receiving the Roy H. Cullen Quality of Life Award given out by the Houston Area Parkinson Society at their Annual Awards Gala on November 5. WPC was recognized for its contributions to the Parkinson's community over the past decade. We were honored to receive this recognition and look forward to continuing our work until we can put an end to Parkinson's.

The WPC Blog has been inspiring so many of us lately! From the most recent post on swallowing and Parkinson's by Hanneke Kalf, PhD, SLP-CCC to the post by Omotola Thomas, MSc who writes in her piece, "Where are you?" about the lack of
patient engagement across Africa and her search for advocates who she can connect to in order to change how Parkinson's is discussed across the continent.

It’s been a busy month and as we count down now to the end of 2017, I invite you to think about your plans for attending the WPC 2019. Below you can read about our new WPC Delegate Leader program. We are looking for Delegate Leaders to help organize groups to travel to the WPC. It’s always more fun to travel together than alone. Take a look at the program details. I hope you will consider it and apply.

Kind regards,

Elizabeth "Eli" Pollard
Executive Director

WPC Blog Highlight

The FDA and Oversight of Stem Cells: Implications For Parkinson's Disease

by Jeffrey H. Kordower, PhD and Patrik Brundin MD, PhD
The FDA recently announced that they planned to crack down on the numerous “stem cell clinics” that dealt in unscrupulous practices and were deemed by the FDA to be dangerous. Dr. Scott Gottlieb, the FDA commissioner, was quoted as saying that the FDA will not allow deceitful actors to take advantage of vulnerable patients by purporting to have treatments or cures for serious diseases without any proof that they actually work. Although there were no mentions of stem cell treatments for Parkinson’s disease (PD) in this article, we applaud the FDA for taking such a stand and believe it is very important for people with PD to understand, that certain stem cell programs are based on rigorous peer-review science while others are nonscientific and exist to bilk money from vulnerable patients. Indeed, the history of cell replacement strategies for PD, is littered with examples of cell transplantation trials that were not preceded by rigorous scientific data or that were conducted in manner where the chances of success were minimal.

The idea that replacing lost dopaminergic cells with new ones was initially established in the 1970’s and 1980’s. The field of neural transplantation took off when the first clinical trials with dopamine neuron transplants obtained from fetuses were conducted in 1987. Investigators around the world, following the standards of science that were considered rigorous in those days, established that nigral neurons from rat embryos could survive transplantation to the brain, produce dopamine and correct motor dysfunction in animal models of PD. Concurrent with this development, a miraculous cure for PD was claimed following transplantation of cells from the patients’ own adrenal medulla. This was surprising to most investigators, since the animal data suggesting that adrenal medulla grafts would exert beneficial effects was not convincing, and the mild functional effects seen in animal models of PD were at best transient. The report claiming success of adrenal medulla grafts in one PD patient was published in the New England Journal of Medicine in 1987, and triggered a flurry of activity with hundreds of patients around the world receiving such transplants. Because adrenal medullary cells do not have the ethical concerns of fetal cells, and the reported case was described as showing remarkable benefit, many neurosurgeons felt compelled to test the procedure. In general, the results were poor with no sustained beneficial effects. Instead, significant morbidity and mortality were seen in these patients.

Read The Rest Here . . .

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convention center with thousands of strangers can be intimidating. The congress may feel like it’s a long way into the future, but now is the perfect time to start making connections. With some preparation there will be plenty of friendly faces in the crowd when you arrive in Kyoto. Here are some things you can do!

**Reach Out To A WPC Ambassador**
Our ambassadors are poised to answer your questions and to provide guidance for local organizing efforts for those planning to attend WPC 2019. They will also be sending out email updates specific to their regions. To be added to the emailing list for the ambassador closest to your region, click here. Ambassadors will send periodic messages for those planning to attend WPC 2019.

**Become A WPC Delegate Leader**
Ambassadors can help you build a team closer to home. A WPC Delegate Leader works with the WPC to build a group of people interested in attending the congress. Once registration opens in September, they will be able to sign-up for the WPC 2019 Buddies Program when registration opens in September of 2018. Delegate Leader will work with their local group to coordinate travel plans and make sure people meet important deadlines. It's so much more fun to travel together! To learn more click here!

**Join the WPC Buddies Program**
The Buddies program was established at the WPC 2013 to allow people to make a one-on-one connection to another delegate. The Buddies program was established at the WPC 2013 to allow people to make a one-on-one connection to another delegate. The Buddies program was established at the WPC 2013 to allow people to make a one-on-one connection to another delegate. The Buddies program was established at the WPC 2013 to allow people to make a one-on-one connection to another delegate. The Buddies program was established at the WPC 2013 to allow people to make a one-on-one connection to another delegate.

See You in Kyoto!

Send us your picture

**Our Blogger Partner Benjamin Stecher, author of Tomorrow Edition, hosted a WPC info table at**

**Highlight from WPC 2016:**

Drug Repurposing: Calcium Channel Blockers and Beyond
Up to 40% of people with early Parkinson’s (PD) will display cognitive deficits on formal testing, but in a majority these deficits have little impact upon activities of daily living. “Mild cognitive impairment (MCI)” associated with PD affects different cognitive domains (e.g. memory, attention, visuospatial function). PD-MCI affects quality of life in the person with PD and their carers. Attentional impairments may be most important in determining poorer quality of life. The pathophysiological substrate underpinning the early cognitive deficits in PD is varied both neurochemically and neuropathologically. Cognitive deficits mediated by dopaminergic dysfunction (particularly via the caudate nucleus) are common but may not necessarily predict cognitive decline. The role of norepinephrine is
yet to fully established, but is likely to be important in mediating attentional function. Perhaps the most “malignant” substrate relates to cholinergic deficiency, which is also a key player in the symptoms of dementia associated with PD. Progression to dementia in PD is by no means inevitable, but occurs around six times more commonly than in age-matched people without PD. Current age is the biggest risk factor for dementia in PD, but other factors, including motor phenotype and genotypic background are also involved. Research has focused upon phenotypic, “wet” (e.g. cerebrospinal fluid, CSF) and “dry” (e.g. neuroimaging) biomarkers that may more accurately predict and monitor cognitive decline in people with PD. Although progress has been made there remain issues with regard to predictive value in the individual subject, rather than in a group setting, as well as the availability (and to some degree acceptability) of some investigations. From the phenotypic perspective, a postural instability-gait difficulty motor pattern, autonomic dysfunction and presence of REM Sleep Behaviour Disorder appear to predict cognitive decline. Low levels CSF beta-amyloid, above median retention of
11C-PIB on PET scanning, and reduced inhibition of short-latency afferent inhibition, amongst others, may all indicate a greater likelihood of dementia. Future research should focus upon establishing more robust biomarkers that may be applied widely, with high levels of acceptability. Ultimately, identifying individuals at high risk of dementia will allow earlier and more focused use of disease-modifying treatments.

Download Slides Here
WPC 2019 Ambassador Rune Vethe and Parky the Raccoon taking a photo break during a hike in Norway.

See all the places that Parky has been on [whereisparky.org](http://whereisparky.org).

**Order Your Own Parky Here**

**Share Your Parky Photo Here**

All profits from the sale of Parky the Raccoon are used to fund the WPC Travel Grant Program to bring junior researchers, junior clinicians and people with Parkinson's to the 5th World Parkinson Congress. Visit the [Where Is Parky website](http://whereisparky.org) to learn more about our mascot.

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**WPC Receives the Roy H. Cullen Quality of Life Award**

From left to right: Diane Rehm, winner of the President's Award; Robert Flatt, winner of the Lillie Cullen Quality of Life Award; Eli Pollard, Executive Director of the World Parkinson Coalition

At their 2017 Annual Awards Gala, the Houston Area Parkinson's Society honored the World Parkinson Coalition with the Roy H. Cullen Quality of Life Award "in recognition of its unparallel leadership, wisdom, and dedication to helping those who live with the disease by bringing the full spectrum of the global Parkinson's community together triennially at the World Parkinson Congress in locations throughout the world."

Elizabeth "Eli" Pollard, Executive Director, attended the gala to accept the award on behalf of the World Parkinson Coalition.

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