

Neuropathy Hope

Hope through caring, support, research, education, and empowerment

A newsletter for members of Western Neuropathy Association (WNA)



WESTERN NEUROPATHY ASSOCIATION

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■ FDA OKS SPINAL CORD STIMULATION FOR DIABETIC NEUROPATHY PAIN

Mariam E. Tucker, Clinical Endocrinology News, July 21, 2021

The Food and Drug Administration has approved the first high-frequency spinal cord stimulation (SCS) therapy for treating painful diabetic neuropathy (PDN).

The approval is specific for the treatment of chronic pain associated with PDN using the Nevro's Senza System with 10 kHz stimulation. It is intended for patients whose pain is refractory to, or who can't tolerate, conventional medical treatment.

The 10 kHz device, called HFX, involves minimally invasive epidural implantation of the stimulator device, which delivers mild electrical impulses to the nerves to interrupt pain signal to the brain. Such spinal cord stimulation "is a straightforward, well-established treatment for chronic pain that's been used for over 30 years," according to the company, although this is the first approval of the modality specifically for PDN.

Asked to comment, Rodica Pop-Busui MD, PhD, the Larry D. Soderquist Professor in Diabetes at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, said that "the approval of the Nevro 10kHz high-frequency spinal cord stimulation to treat pain associated with diabetic neuropathy has the potential for benefit for many patients with diabetes and painful diabetic peripheral neuropathy."

She noted that, "this new therapeutic approach besides effective pain reduction has the additional benefit of bypassing drug interactions."

She also cautioned, on the other hand, that "it is not very clear yet how easy it will be for all eligible patients to have access to this technology, what will be the actual costs, the insurance coverage, or the acceptance by patients across various sociodemographic backgrounds from the at-large clinical care."

Both 6-and 12-month results show benefit

The FDA approval was based on 6-month data from a prospective, multicenter, open-label randomized clinical trial published in JAMA Neurology.¹

Use of the 10-kHz SCS device was compared with conventional treatment alone in 216 patients with PDN refractory to gabapentinoids and at least one other analgesic class and lower limb pain intensity of 5 cm or more on a 10-cm visual analog scale.

The primary endpoint, percentage of participants reporting 50% pain relief or more without worsening of baseline neurologic deficits at 3 months, was met 75 of 95 (79%) with the 10-kHz SCS plus conventional treatment ($P < .001$).

At 12 months, those in the original SCS group plus 86% of subjects given the option to cross over from the conventional treatment group showed "clear and sustained" benefits of the 10-kHz SCS with regard to lower-limb pain, pain interference with daily living, sleep quality, and activity.

The patients will be followed for a total of 24 months.

Commercial launch of HFX in the United States will begin immediately, the company said.

Reference

¹Petersen, E.A., Stauss, T.G., Scowcroft, J.A., et al. (2021). Effect Of High-frequency (10-kHz) Spinal Cord Stimulation In Patients With Painful Diabetic Neuropathy, A Randomized Clinical Trial. *Journal American Medical Association Neurology*, 78(6),687-698.

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**Please contact
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Katherine Stenzel
Editor

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NOVEMBER SUPPORT GROUP SCHEDULE

Everyone is welcome to join any virtual support group meeting via telephone, smartphone, tablet or computer. We urge you to take this opportunity to talk with other people that know about and experience neuropathy.

All meetings are held via Zoom which also have access for telephones. Note that Zoom meeting participation is not limited to the physical location in the name. Anyone from any city is welcome to attend, listen and/or share.

- **November 13** (Saturday) 11:00am – 1:00pm PDT/ 1:00pm – 3:00pm CDT
Houston, TX Neuropathy Support Group
Group Leader: Katherine Stenzel at klstenzel@hotmail.com
- **November 17** (Wednesday) 10:30am – 11:30am PDT/12:30pm – 1:30pm CDT
Sign-in opens at 10:00am PDT/12:00pm CDT
Monterey, CA Neuropathy Support Group
Group Leader: Bill Donovan, MD at wbdpad@cal.berkeley.edu
- **November 27** (Saturday) 11:00am – 1:00pm PDT/ 1:00pm – 3:00pm CDT
Houston, TX Monthly Open Discussion on Neuropathy
Group Leader: Katherine Stenzel at klstenzel@hotmail.com

Email the Group Leader to:

- request the meeting invitation/Zoom link for a specific date
- provide your name, mailing address, telephone number and email address

Instructions will be sent for connecting to the meeting via computer/tablet, smartphone or telephone

SEPTEMBER WEBINAR REVIEW

PAINFUL FEET? BALANCE ISSUES? TRY THESE SOCKS!

Did you attend the September Webinar sponsored by Socks For Balance/Socks for Neuropathy? If you did, you learned about VoxxLife socks and their Dermatone Neuropoint Socks (DNS) which bring pain relief and balance improvement.

Their website, www.socksforneuropathy.com, describes two clinical studies – one for pain relief and the other for balance. The study for pain relief found that after wearing the socks for a week, the average pain reported by 1,000 neuropathy patients went from a 7 (severe) to a 2 (mild)! The balance study with 69 patients used the Sway Balance test to demonstrate that overall stability was 31% greater when wearing the DNS socks. Check out the website for the study details.

The socks work by using a specific technology, called HPT, that's woven into the bottom of Voxx's socks. The technology looks like a pattern. It's not something that you feel but it's at the heart of how the socks help.

According to the information presented during the webinar, as soon as you wear a pair of the socks, the HPT pattern comes in contact with the nerve receptors on the bottom of your feet. This triggers a message through your peripheral nervous system and up to your brain.

Once your brain receives the message (almost instantly), it processes the information and begins to send out commands to your hands, feet, and the rest of the body. These commands help your body regulate the neuropathic pain, such as burning or tingling feet. The website states, you should feel at least a little better within ten seconds of putting on the socks.

Review the video testimonials on the website where customers express their delight with the socks. Try them yourself and if you are not happy or they don't do what you expect, you can return them within 30 days. Order through the website by clicking on the 'Shop Now' tab at the far right.

EDITOR'S NOTE Katherine Stenzel, Editor, WNA Board Director

The front page of the newsletter has a list of the articles in the left-hand column. Check there first to see what's inside! Here's a summary of the issue:

- **The FDA has approved a new treatment for diabetic neuropathy!** This is the first time high-frequency spinal cord stimulation (SCS) has been approved for chronic pain associated with neuropathy. It's intended for patients who can't tolerate conventional medical treatment. During the clinical trial, 79% of the participants reported 50% pain relief!
- **Julie Falligant continues her discussion on breathing using *Alternate Nostril Breath*.** I was astonished to read the many benefits of this technique, such as reducing stress and anxiety, helping with sleep, and strengthening concentration. For our neuropathy, the in and out determined breaths provide more oxygen to our damaged nerves – always a good outcome.
- **If you missed the *Socks for Balance* webinar, you must read the review.** Clinical studies indicate the Voxx socks can help reduce neuropathy pain and increase balance. All from wearing a pair of socks! Look at their website for more details and satisfied customer videos.
- **The Houston Support Group meetings continue to see members with reduced neuropathy pain.** Lynn Carpenter shares her story of how changing to a plant-based diet has reduced her nighttime electric shock pain and spasms. Her article is followed by more information about plant-based diets from Harvard Health along with several ways to easily start this type of eating.
- **Ever wonder where the recommendation for daily Vitamin C comes from?** In the 40s, the Sorby Research Institute in England studied Vitamin C with respect to scurvy. They actually withheld this vitamin to see the effect on the body – something we would not do to human participants today. A new analysis of the results has increased the amount of Vitamin C we need two-fold, so check out the numbers to make sure you are getting enough.
- **To close out the issue, Dr. Donovan writes about driving with neuropathy.** With numbness in our feet, it's easy to mistake the brake and gas pedal! What I found interesting is that resulting accidents are usually found by investigating agencies to be based on cognitive decline – and not neuropathy. This is due to a lack of knowledge of peripheral neuropathy by the investigators even though so many have this condition.

Please send your comments and suggestions to klstenzel@hotmail.com

...Katherine

HOUSTON NEUROPATHY SUPPORT GROUP IN-PERSON MEETING

Houstonians finally met to face-to-face on September 18, 2021 after a 19-month interlude. Yes, virtual support group meetings via ZOOM provided and will continue to provide opportunities for sharing and listening - but there's something special about seeing faces and hearing voices without computer intervention.

To make the meeting even better, the group learned about Tai Chi from Doris Mundle, Houston Public Health Department. Tai Chi's benefit to neuropathy sufferers is that it helps prevent falls. Contributing to this, Tai Chi develops balance, enhances muscular strength, increases mobility and flexibility, reduces pain and improves mental health. Following her presentation was a demonstration of Tai Chi warm ups in which the group practiced a sequence of whole body movements.

Doris was invited to return for the December quarterly meeting to discuss healthy eating and nutrition during the holiday season.

Help With Health Care Challenges

If the number is not in your area, call the one listed and ask for the right number.

Medicare

www.Medicare.gov

...

The Affordable Health Care Act

For current information go to www.HealthCare.gov

...

HICAP

Health Insurance Counseling

for seniors and people with disabilities.

www.cahealthadvocates.org/HICAP/

Call (800) 434-0222 to ask a question or to make an appointment.

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Serving Placer, El Dorado, Yolo, & Sacramento Counties, regardless where you receive your health coverage.

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24 hours a day, seven days a week.

(888) HMO-2219 or (877) 688-9891 TDD

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DRA's Health

Access Project Free publications about the health care, insurance rights and concerns of people with disabilities and serious health conditions. For more information, go to <http://dralegal.org/> and click on "Projects".

DISCOUNTS FOR WNA MEMBERS

The following companies or individuals have agreed to give WNA a discount to WNA members. Give them a call or visit. If you choose to purchase the service or wares of any on this list, pull out your WNA Membership Card and claim the discount.

Anodyne Therapy

Infrared Light Therapy equipment - **12% off all home units.**
Contact: 800-521-6664 or www.anodynetherapy.com

Auburn

The Footpath

825 Lincoln Way
(530) 885-2091
www.footpathshoes.com
WNA Discount: 10% off the regular price shoes.

Elk Grove

Shoes That Fit

8649 Elk Grove Blvd.
(916) 686-1050
WNA Discount: 20% off the regular price shoes.

Fortuna

Strehl's Family Shoes & Repair

Corner of 12th & Main
1155 Main Street
(707) 725-2610
Marilyn Strehl, C.PED
is a Certified Pedorthic
WNA Discount: 10% off the regular price shoes.

West Sacramento

Beverly's Never Just

Haircuts and Lilly's Nails

2007 W. Capitol Ave
Hair - (916) 372-5606
Nails - (916) 346-8342
WNA discount: 10% off the regular price.

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LESS NEUROPATHY PAIN WITH PLANTS Lynn Carpenter, Edmonds, WA

I was skeptical, but I figured I had nothing to lose when I switched over to a totally new way of eating earlier this year. My friend showed me her book, *How Not To Die*, by Michael Greger, M.D., in which there were just two pages where he talked about curing diabetic neuropathy with a plant-based diet. I don't have diabetes; however, my mother had it, so I'm probably pre-diabetic.

I haven't ever had much pain during the day, even as the neuropathy symptoms of numbness increased from my toes up my legs, since I was diagnosed in 1990. It was at night that I suffered really sharp, electric shock-type pains along with spasms in my feet and legs over the last couple of years. Sometimes I had these pains in my hands and wrists, as well. It made getting to sleep very difficult and I found myself relying on more Tylenol PM and magnesium than I wanted to.

After reading Dr. Greger's book, in which he shows that one can cure neuropathy with this new way of eating, I switched my diet away from meats and dairy—going for the hoped-for results as fast as I could. I started shopping at stores that offered

more vegan options—although even my grocery store carries a few of them. I got some cookbooks from the library and made lots of new stir-fry meals and soups.

And, EUREKA, it has worked! I can honestly report that on most nights I have no pain at all as I try to fall asleep. The amazing part is that this reversal happened within 5 days of my changing to an all plant-based meal plan. I started doing this in June and on July 4th I went to a family dinner where I ate several things that I knew I shouldn't have - eggs in the potato salad, a custard dessert and even some cheese. And, wow, did I pay for it with recurring pain for the next 2 nights!

Now, I still have occasional "restless legs," but just as an annoyance as I am trying to fall asleep, not as an excruciatingly painful event. And once in a while, when I do experience some pain, I realize that it might be from a meal that had something in it that I didn't catch. I highly recommend trying a vegan diet to cure your own painful symptoms of neuropathy.

VITAMIN C: REVISITING CONTROVERSIAL STUDY MAY CHANGE RECOMMENDATIONS Robby Berman, Medical News Today¹

- Recommendations for the daily minimum requirements of vitamin C are based on a landmark, if unsettling, study from the 1940s.
- Now, researchers have reanalyzed that study's data using modern statistical tools.
- The new analysis suggests a much higher recommendation for the minimum amount of vitamin C required daily for good health.

In the 1940s, England's Sorby Research Institute conducted experiments to learn how much vitamin C a person needs to avoid scurvy.

The study's findings were later used to justify recommendations from the World Health Organization (WHO) about how much vitamin C is needed for good health.

A fresh analysis of data collected in the Sorby experiments reveals that a person actually needs about twice the current recommended daily amount of vitamin C — 95 milligrams (mg) a day rather than 45 mg a day.

At the time the Sorby study was completed, researchers, who did not have the advantage of computers and modern statistical methodologies, used the "eyeball method" to derive their recommendations.

They concluded that people needed just 10 mg of vitamin C each day to avoid scurvy. The WHO misinterpreted this and quadrupled the figure when making its recommendations. But the new analysis suggests that even this falls far short.

The new findings appear in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.

Reference

¹Berman, R. (2021, September 1). *Vitamin C: Revisiting Controversial Study May Change Recommendations*. Medical News Today. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/vitamin-c-revisiting-controversial-study-may-change-recommendations>

WHAT IS A PLANT-BASED DIET? K.D McManus, MS, RD, LDN, Harvard Health Blog¹

Plant-based or plant-forward eating patterns focus on foods primarily from plants. This includes not only fruits and vegetables, but also nuts, seeds, oils, whole grains, legumes, and beans. It doesn't mean that you are vegetarian or vegan and never eat meat or dairy. Rather, you are proportionately choosing more of your foods from plant sources.

Mediterranean and vegetarian diets

What is the evidence that plant-based eating patterns are healthy? Much nutrition research has examined plant-based eating patterns such as the Mediterranean diet and a vegetarian diet. The Mediterranean diet has a foundation of plant-based foods; it also includes fish, poultry, eggs, cheese, and yogurt a few times a week, with meats and sweets less often.

The Mediterranean diet has been shown in both large population studies and randomized clinical trials to reduce risk of heart disease, metabolic syndrome, diabetes, certain cancers (specifically colon, breast, and prostate cancer), depression, and in older adults, a decreased risk of frailty, along with better mental and physical function.

Vegetarian diets have also been shown to support health, including a lower risk of developing coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and increased longevity.

Plant-based diets offer all the necessary protein, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals for optimal health, and are often higher in fiber and phytonutrients. However, some vegans may need to add a supplement (specifically vitamin B12) to ensure they receive all the nutrients required.

Vegetarian diet variety

Vegetarian diets come in lots of shapes and sizes, and you should choose the version that works best for you.

- Semi-vegetarian or flexitarian includes eggs, dairy foods, and occasionally meat, poultry, fish, and seafood.
- Pescatarian includes eggs, dairy foods, fish, and seafood, but no meat or poultry.

- Vegetarian (sometimes referred to as lacto-ovo vegetarian) includes eggs and dairy foods, but no meat, poultry, fish, or seafood.
- Vegan includes no animal foods.

8 ways to get started with a plant-based diet

1. Eat lots of vegetables. Fill half your plate with vegetables at lunch and dinner. Make sure you include plenty of colors in choosing your vegetables. Enjoy vegetables as a snack with hummus, salsa, or guacamole.
2. Change the way you think about meat. Have smaller amounts. Use it as a garnish instead of a centerpiece.
3. Choose good fats. Fats in olive oil, olives, nuts and nut butters, seeds, and avocados are particularly healthy choices.
4. Cook a vegetarian meal at least one night a week. Build these meals around beans, whole grains, and vegetables.
5. Include whole grains for breakfast. Start with oatmeal, quinoa, buckwheat, or barley. Then add some nuts or seeds along with fresh fruit.
6. Go for greens. Try a variety of green leafy vegetables such as kale, collards, Swiss chard, spinach, and other greens each day. Steam, grill, braise, or stir-fry to preserve their flavor and nutrients.
7. Build a meal around a salad. Fill a bowl with salad greens such as romaine, spinach, Bibb, or red leafy greens. Add an assortment of other vegetables along with fresh herbs, beans, peas, or tofu.
8. Eat fruit for dessert. A ripe, juicy peach, a refreshing slice of watermelon, or a crisp apple will satisfy your craving for a sweet bite after a meal.

Reference

¹McManus, K. (2020, August 31). *What Is A Plant-Based Diet And Why Should You Try It.* Harvard Health Blog. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/what-is-a-plant-based-diet-and-why-should-you-try-it-2018092614760>

DISCOUNTS FOR WNA MEMBERS

Continued from page 4

Neuropathy Support Formula/Nerve Renew

(1-888-840-7142) is a supplement that a number of people are taking and reporting it has helped them. The company gives members of WNA a discount and free shipping. The 30-day supply is \$40 (normally \$49.97). It can be auto-shipped monthly for the same. A 3-month supply via auto-ship is \$95.00. They also have a Nerve Repair Optimizer that is available for \$20 with free shipping. Marsha, the manager, said that if anyone wants more information about the product, they can call and ask for her. If she is not readily available, leave your number and she will call you back. They now have Nerve Renew Fast Acting Cream at \$20 for WNA members. It reportedly takes the edge off numbness.

Building Better Balance DVD, Developing Spine Health

– The DVDs are \$30 each. The price of a full set (4 DVDs) is \$100 (that's a 20% discount). You can order the DVDs by going to the website www.building-better-balance.com. Shipping is free. You can also order the DVDs over the phone using a credit card. Call (707) 318-4476 and leave a message. Vanessa Kettler, Balance and Fall Prevention www.building-better-balance.com (707) 318-4476

Additional Discounts

Do you know a business that might offer our members a discount? Tell them that they will be listed each month in our newsletter and on our website so our members will know of their generosity and patronize their business. Call 888-556-3356 or email admin@WNAinfo.org.

We'll mail an agreement form to the business, and once we have it, we'll add them to this list.

ALTERNATE NOSTRIL BREATH Julie Falligant, Yoga Teacher

My go-to breath practice is Alternate Nostril Breath – especially when I’m feeling anxious, suffering unpleasant physical sensations or experiencing insomnia. Just a few minutes of this practice helps to slow and deepen my breath and quiet and steady my mind. It’s been a game-changer for me.

In addition to reducing anxiety, stress, and insomnia, Alternate Nostril Breath has many other potential benefits. With this technique, the practitioner alternates the flow of each full breath between left and right nostrils to create a one-pointed focus for the mind. The practice is said to strengthen concentration ability, making it a great preparation tool for meditation. With the mind on the breath, the exhales and inhales tend to be more complete, expelling more toxins and drawing in more fresh oxygen to nourish cells and nerves. Alternate Nostril Breathing can also help to settle the nervous system and lower blood pressure.

Ready to give it a try? Here’s how:

1. Sit with a long spine and relaxed abdomen. Make sure you’re warm enough—maybe cover your shoulders with a blanket or shawl.
2. Lift your right hand as if to wave, and separate your middle and ring fingers to create a V between them. (For Star Trek fans, think Vulcan salute.) Turn your right palm toward your face, and place your index and middle fingertips lightly on the space between your eyebrows or curl them into the palm of your hand. Position your thumb on your right nostril and your ring finger on your left nostril. (If your lifted right arm becomes fatigued, try propping it up with your left hand/arm. If your right hand is not available or comfortable, use your left hand instead. Better yet, do a hands-free practice. More on that later.)
3. Exhale completely, then gently close your right nostril with your thumb.
4. Inhale slowly through your left nostril. Close your left nostril with your ring finger. Lift your thumb and exhale softly down your right nostril. Inhale back up your right nostril. Close off your right nostril, and open your left nostril to exhale left. (This completes one round.)

5. Continue this pattern (exhale, inhale, switch) for several minutes at a comfortable, steady pace, gradually slowing down your inhalations and exhalations. Let your eyes close, or your gaze soften. Maintain your upright posture to allow for full breaths.
6. Complete the practice with a left exhale, and release your right hand to your lap. Sit quietly for several minutes, and notice the effects.

Alternate Nostril Breath is made more accessible by practicing it hands-free – my usual method. Instead of blocking off nostrils with your hand, just visualize the breath flowing from side to side as you follow the pattern above. My breath teachers say that we get the same benefits with this approach as with the hands-on version. A hands-free practice comes in handy (no pun intended) in these situations:

- If one of your nostrils is congested or if you have a deviated septum
- When you’re in bed and trying to fall asleep
- When you’re in a public place and want to practice inconspicuously
- During a pandemic or cold and flu season when touching your face is inadvisable

Hands-on or hands-free, the more time you spend practicing Alternate Nostril Breath the more benefits you’ll experience. However, start with just two to ten minutes at a time, and notice what you notice. Just begin!

References

- Carlson, L.H. (2021). *Breathe To Stay Balanced: Ayurvedic Pranayama To Enhance Your Energy*. Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health. <https://kripalu.org/resources/pranayama-self-soothing-3-yogic-breathing-practices-cultivate-peace>
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COFFEE, DEPRESSION AND ANTI-INFLAMMATION Kimberly Goad, AARP

You don’t need an expert to tell you how much better that first jolt of morning java can make you feel. But what you may not know is that the effects could be more than fleeting. Drinking coffee may reduce your risk of depression by nearly one-third, according to research from Harvard Medical School. The effect may be related to coffee’s anti-inflammatory properties. Researchers suspect that both coffee and some antidepressant medications lower the body’s levels of inflammation, which

may have an effect on depression. What’s more, coffee has phytochemicals that feed the good bacteria in our guts. The good bacteria may produce or enhance other compounds that act on the brain and have beneficial effects on mood.

Reference

- Goad, K. (2021, September). *Five Surprising Health Benefits Of Coffee*. AARP. <https://www.aarp.org/health/healthy-living/info-2021/coffee-health-benefits.html>

■ PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY AND THE OLDER DRIVER William B. Donovan, MD

Imagine driving down the freeway in light traffic, exiting on a ramp with plenty of room between you and the car in front of you. You apply the brakes as usual, but your car begins to go faster. The harder you press the brake, the more the engine roars. You hear the antilock braking system growl, and you barely come to a stop, striking the bumper of the vehicle ahead of you.

This story was told by an older member of the local peripheral neuropathy support group. He went on to tell how he had taken his car to the dealership and asked the service manager to test drive it. To his surprise, the brakes checked out perfectly. Later, he recalled having read an article about an older driver who confused the brake with the accelerator, plowing into a crowd of pedestrians in a street fair at the Santa Monica's Farmer's Market, and our driver wondered whether his own foot pedals might be too close together.

He reported that he had been experiencing some tingling, discomfort, and numbness in his feet. On his next visit to the doctor, he mentioned this problem. His examination included tandem walk; standing balance with eyes closed and arms extended; light touch, pinprick, vibratory and position sense; and deep tendon reflexes. All findings were consistent with peripheral neuropathy. He was tested for diabetes, which accounts for 40 percent of peripheral neuropathy cases, B-12 and folate deficiency and autoimmune disorder. All of these tests were negative, as was the patient's history of infections, alcoholism, other toxic exposure, and hereditary history. The final diagnosis was "idiopathic," which means cause is undetermined, and comprises 40 percent of peripheral neuropathy cases.

Referral to a psychiatrist resulted in the prescription of a progressive exercise program, more comfortable shoes with wide toe box, modification of the brake pedal to provide greater clearance from the accelerator, and referral to our support group. Our member reported that he was benefiting from the prescribed regimen and had not had similar difficulty stopping his car since his accident. He attends monthly meetings of the neuropathy support group and regularly visits the website of the Western Neuropathy Association.

After hearing this story, I asked how many of the members in attendance had experienced difficulty driving, due

to their neuropathy. Well over half acknowledged having had such driving problems — missing pedals, misjudging how much pressure to exert on the pedal, as well as confusing the gas with the brake. They had adapted to their impairment by becoming aware of their deficit and being more cautious and deliberate while driving.

Following the meeting, I began investigating this issue further. An internet search for "older driver runs over pedestrian" revealed over one hundred citations, including the Farmer's Market massacre. I contacted several police officers who were familiar with similar cases. They were aware that such older drivers "confused" the brake with the accelerator. What was surprising was that they all attributed the problem to cognitive, rather than sensory, confusion. When questioned further, they believed it would be unlikely for a police officer to be aware of the existence of peripheral neuropathy. Typically, police officers would pass off the case as being due to senility, pull the driver's license, and submit it to the state licensing agency for re-evaluation.

I contacted the official in one of the larger states responsible for reviewing all the traffic injury reports filed for almost 30 years. Having suffered from diabetic neuropathy himself, he was familiar with impairment due to peripheral neuropathy. In reviewing tens of thousands of cases, however, he could recall not one report mentioning this as a possible cause.

A review of the literature revealed an enormous knowledge gap. In a study of disease awareness, ignorance of this condition was well-documented. Only 7 percent of adults knew about neuropathy. This lack of knowledge comes despite an estimate that 8 to 9 percent of Medicare recipients carry neuropathy as either a primary or secondary diagnosis — about 20 million people (The Neuropathy Association, 1999).

Considering the increasing number of aging drivers and their higher risk of accidents per miles driven, the assessment of driving ability is becoming more important. The principal source for locating help with driver impairment remediation is the Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists. The website at www.aded.net will help the driver locate the nearest evaluation, education, rehabilitation and vehicle modification resources.



WESTERN NEUROPATHY ASSOCIATION

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ZENTOES FOR FOOT PAIN, PRESSURE AND DISCOMFORT

Barbara Montgomery tried this product that is similar to one recommended by a member's doctor. While the main use is for hammertoe alignment, the soft silicone gel also provides cushioned, shock-absorbing support while standing or moving. When contacting the company, they said that having the toes in proper alignment puts it in a better position to grip the surface as you walk, which in turn helps balance improve. They can be used with any type shoe or simply by themselves. Barbara ordered them from Amazon and reported that they felt good when used with shoes. ZenToes provides a 60-day customer satisfaction guarantee if their product is not a good match for your feet.

<https://zento.com/products/hammer-toe-straightener-and-corrector-4-pack-crests>



Western Neuropathy Association (WNA)

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Our mission is to provide support, information and referral to people with neuropathy and to those who care about them, to inform and connect with the health care community, and to support research.

Dues - \$30 a year

All contributions and dues are tax-deductible.

We are supported by dues-paying members, contributions by members and friends, and occasionally, small grants and fundraisers.

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