



WESTERN NEUROPATHY ASSOCIATION

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Issue 03  
Volume 18

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# Neuropathy Hope

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

A newsletter for members of Western Neuropathy Association (WNA)

## ■ PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS AND TREATMENTS FOR NERVE PAIN

By Sonya Wells, PharmD, MPH

Getting control of your nerve pain can be tough. The good news is that doctors have a lot of effective ways to treat it. These include medicines, like prescription pain relievers or anticonvulsants and antidepressants as well as electrical stimulation and other techniques. So, if you have nerve pain, whether it's caused by cancer, shingles, or another condition, have hope. Here's a rundown of the prescription treatments that your doctor might recommend.

### Prescription Medicines for Nerve Pain

There are several types of medication that help with nerve pain. However, not all of the ones listed here will necessarily work for your specific type of pain. The best choice for you depends on the cause of your pain, the severity, the potential side effects, and other factors.

- **Anticonvulsants.** The name might sound alarming, but some of these drugs can help people with nerve pain. In fact, they're often considered a first choice. These drugs were originally developed for people with epilepsy to control seizures. It turned out that their effects on the nervous system could also help dull pain. Side effects may include drowsiness, dizziness, and nausea. Keep in mind that not all anticonvulsants will help. So, your doctor will choose medicines that have been shown in studies to work on nerve pain.

- **Antidepressants.** Along with anticonvulsants, certain types of antidepressants can be the first choice for treating neuropathic pain. Nerve pain specialists often recommend two major types.

- Tricyclic antidepressants have been used for decades. While they're not used as often today to treat depression, they can play an important role in controlling nerve pain symptoms. Many studies have shown that they can help. These drugs can cause side effects, like dizziness, constipation, blurred vision, and upset stomach. They might not be safe for people with certain conditions, like heart problems.

- SNRIs (serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors) are a newer type of antidepressant that seem to help with nerve pain. In general, these drugs have fewer side effects than tricyclic antidepressants. They might be safer for some, especially older people with heart problems. However, they might not be as effective as tricyclics in tackling nerve pain.

Using antidepressants for nerve pain can have an added benefit, considering that chronic pain often coincides with depression. Chronic pain can make a person depressed, and depression can often make the experience of chronic pain seem worse. Of course, some people don't like the idea of taking antidepressants for their nerve pain because they worry that taking antidepressants implies that the pain is just "in their heads." But that's not the case at all. It just happens that these drugs work with both conditions.

- **Painkillers.** For severe nerve pain, powerful opioid painkillers can help. Studies have found that for many types of nerve pain, they are as effective as anticonvulsants or antidepressants. Unlike other treatments for nerve pain, they also work very quickly. However, because of their side effects, many doctors only turn to these drugs when other treatments haven't worked. Opioid painkillers can cause constipation, stomach upset, and sedation. They also pose some risk of addiction and abuse, so it's important to use them exactly as your doctor recommends. Other painkillers -- like prescription doses of NSAIDs (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) -- might be helpful. But on the whole, those drugs don't seem to work well with nerve pain.

- **Topical treatments.** Painkilling gels and lidocaine patches are another effective approach; you would apply them on a particularly painful area of skin. These work best with small, localized spots of pain. The side effects are minor and include skin irritation.

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# Roster of Our WNA Information and Support Groups

## 2020 WNA Board of Directors

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Please contact  
your group leader or  
check your group  
page on the  
WNA website –  
[www.WNAinfo.org](http://www.WNAinfo.org)  
to find out about the  
topic/speaker for the  
upcoming meeting.

**Bev Anderson**  
Editor

Newsletter Design by



## CALIFORNIA

### Auburn

1<sup>st</sup> Monday, 11 AM  
Woodside Village MH Park  
12155 Luther Road  
Sharlene McCord (530) 878-8392

### Castro Valley

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday, 1:30 PM  
First Presbyterian Church  
2490 Grove Way (next to Trader Joe)  
Joy Rotz (510) 842-8440

### Concord

3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday, 1:30 PM  
First Christian Church  
3039 Willow Pass Road  
Wayne Korsinen (925) 685-0953

### Davis

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 3:30-5:00 PM  
Davis Senior Center, 646 A Street  
Mary Sprifke (530) 756-5102

### Elk Grove

2<sup>nd</sup> Tues., 1 pm  
New Senior Center  
8230 Civic Center Dr.  
Roger White (916) 686-4719

### Folsom

3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday, 1:00 PM  
Association Resource Center  
950 Glenn Dr., Suite 150  
Bev Anderson (877) 622-6298

### Fresno

3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, 11:00 AM  
United Community Church of Christ  
5550 N. Fresno St.  
Bonnie Zimmerman (559) 313-6140

### Grass Valley

2<sup>nd</sup> Monday, 1:30 PM  
GV United Methodist Church  
236 S. Church Street  
Bev Anderson 877-622-6298

### Merced

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday, 1 PM  
Central Presbyterian Church  
1920 Canal Street  
(Hoffmeiser Center across from the church)  
Larry Frice (209) 358-2045

### Modesto

3<sup>rd</sup> Monday, 10:30 AM  
Trinity United Presbyterian Church  
1600 Carver Rd., Rm. 503  
Harkaman Ghag (209) 541-5404

## Monterey

3<sup>rd</sup> Wed., 10:30 AM (odd numbered months)  
First Presbyterian Church  
501 El Dorado Street  
Dr. William Donovan (831) 625-3407

## Napa

1<sup>st</sup> Thursday, 2 PM  
Napa Senior Center, 1500 Jefferson St.  
Ron Patrick (707) 257-2343  
bonjournapa@hotmail.com

## Placerville

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday, 1 PM  
El Dorado Senior Center  
937 Spring Street  
Bev Anderson (877) 622-6298  
(See note on page 3 for Jan., Feb. & March)

## Roseville

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday, 1PM (odd numbered months)  
Sierra Point Sr. Res.  
5161 Foothills Blvd.  
Stan Pashote (916) 409-5747

## Sacramento

3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, 1:30 PM  
Northminster Presby. Church  
3235 Pope Street  
Sonya Wells (916) 627-0228

## San Diego

3<sup>rd</sup> Monday, 1:30 PM  
The Remington Club  
16925 Hierba Dr.  
Chhattar Kucheria (858) 774-1408

## San Francisco

2<sup>nd</sup> Monday, 11 AM – 12:30 PM  
Kaiser French Campus  
4141 Geary Blvd. between 6th & 7th Ave.  
Rm. 411A - Watch for signs.  
Merle (415) 346-9781

## San Jose

3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday, 10:30 AM  
O'Conner Hospital, 2105 Forest Avenue  
SJ DePaul Conf. Rm.  
Kathy Romero (407) 319-2557

## Santa Barbara

4<sup>th</sup> Saturday, 10AM (Sept., Oct., Jan., March, May)  
St. Raphael Catholic Church  
5444 Hollister Ave., Conference Room  
Nancy Kriech (805) 967-8886

## Santa Cruz

3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday, 12:30 PM (odd numbered months)  
Trinity Presbyterian Church  
420 Melrose Avenue  
Mary Ann Leer (831) 477-1239

## Santa Rosa

1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday, 10:30 AM  
Steele Lane Community Center  
415 Steele Lane  
Judy Leandro (707) 480-3740

## South San Diego

4<sup>th</sup> Thursday, 2 PM  
Garden Room  
3541 Park Blvd.  
Jacklyn (858) 228-7480

## Walnut Creek

4<sup>th</sup> Friday, 10 AM  
Rossmoor, Hillside Clubhouse  
Vista Room  
Karen Hewitt (925) 932-2248  
**Westlake Village - Thousand Oaks**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Monday, 4:30-5:30 PM  
United Methodist Church  
Youth Classroom 1 (faces parking lot)  
1049 S. Westlake Blvd.  
Angie Becerra (805) 390-2999

## NEVADA

### Las Vegas

3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday, 1 PM  
Mountain View Presbyterian Church  
8601 Del Webb Blvd.  
Barbara Montgomery  
lvneuropathygroup@gmail.com

## OREGON

### Grants Pass

3<sup>rd</sup> Wed., 4:30 – 6:30 PM  
(except July, Aug., and Dec.)  
Club Northwest  
2160 NW Vine Street  
David Tally 541-218-4418

## TEXAS

### Austin

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday, 9:30-11:00 AM  
Education Room  
Conley-Guerrero Activity Center  
808 Nile Street  
Marty Meraviglia RN, ACNS-BC  
(512) 970-5454  
mgmeraviglia@gmail.com

### Houston

3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday, 1-2:30 PM  
Memorial Drive United Methodist Church  
12955 Memorial Drive  
South Parking Lot, Southeast Entrance  
Room D100 (Ground Floor)  
klstenzel@hotmail.com

For information on groups in the following areas or any other place you are interested in finding out about a support group, call Bev Anderson at (877) 622-6298. She is actively trying to open new groups and re-open closed groups. Check with her about a group in your area especially if you would volunteer to be the leader.

New Leadership needed. No meetings for now. Contact for information: Bev Anderson 877-622-6298. California: Alturas, Antioch-Brentwood, Bakersfield, Berkeley – Oakland, Carmichael, Clearlake, Costa Mesa, Crescent City, Eureka, Fort Bragg, Garberville, Jackson, Lakeport, Lincoln, Livermore, Lodi, Madera, Mt. Shasta, Oxnard, Quincy, Redding, Redwood City, Salinas, Santa Maria, San Rafael, Sonoma, Sonora, Stockton, Susanville, Truckee, Tulare-Visalia, Turlock, West Sacramento, Weed, Ukiah, Woodland, Yreka, Yuba City-Marysville. Nevada: Reno-Sparks. Oregon: Brookings, Medford, Portland, Salem.

## President's Message By Bev Anderson

Here we are in March already. Only two months until the WNA Annual Conference – NEUROPATHY NOW on Thursday, May 7. The program is shaping up nicely and we are due to have a few exhibitors this year that could make a difference for you. More details will follow in the April newsletter. If you can come to Sacramento for the Conference, please register now. You can mail your check in using the Registration Form in this issue or go to our website [www.pnhelp.org](http://www.pnhelp.org) or [www.WNAinfo.org](http://www.WNAinfo.org) and register there with a credit card. You can also call Lindsay in our office at (888) 556-3356 to register over the phone with a credit card. Whichever you choose, we will be delighted you are coming.



**The addition of Texas came as a welcome surprise several months ago.** It was finalized on February 14, 2020. It was an appropriate day – Valentine's Day. We are delighted to welcome them to WNA. It opens more doors for them and for us to make a difference for people. We met the two support group leaders over the phone and found they are delightful and very accomplished people. I was in Dallas and San Antonio years ago and also drove through Amarillo. I learned a lesson there that if it is raining, park and wait for the storm to pass. It doesn't take much rain to flood a highway. San Antonio, the site of The Alamo, is an especially beautiful city. All of these need a support group.

Pam Hart of our Board of Directors is currently living and working in Texas just north of Dallas. She will be working together with the Houston support group leader, Katherine Stenzel, to start a group in Dallas. Katherine is a geophysicist that worked in the oil and gas industry to evaluate the data received from prospective oil well drillers to help them choose drill sites. She retired and spent three years as a senior director of Halliburton before retiring and finding her encore volunteer opportunity leading the Houston Neuropathy Support Group among other things. She has neuropathy. Marty Meraviglia, leader of the Austin Neuropathy Support Group, is a retired nurse. She taught at the University of Texas in Austin, did research, worked as an oncology nurse and as an advanced practice nurse in clinics. She doesn't have neuropathy but has worked with a number of neuropathy patients. She says she likes to work with people to help them with self-care.

**Dr. Hammock reports that the first clinical trial for EC5026 is halfway complete and so far, it looks promising.** Everyone is healthy. This trial has people who are in good health trying it to see if there are any problems with it. It will be finished at the end of April. It will be May or June before all the data is released. Then the next trial will start. It will be up to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as these trials are being done under their auspices. I'm hopeful that it will move along quickly. This medication will be a help to people with various types of pain. I learned that it will be helpful for arthritis as well as neuropathy and fibromyalgia. NIH has already given a grant to Karen Wagner, who spoke at our conference a couple of years ago, to use it to test its effectiveness with cancer pain patients.

**Another article that alerts us to the dangers of tick bites and other animal bacteria transferred to humans that cause disease which may be neuropathy.** It is important to follow up any bite you may receive. This includes spiders. There are likely numerous cases of neuropathy caused by Bartonella.

**Please remember that if you don't have a support group, the first Monday night of the month at 6:30 PM, there is a Telesupport Group for you.** Call 1-877-366-0711. When asked for your pass code using your telephone key pad, put in 36199447#. You can practice the pass code on your phone key pad without lifting the receiver so it is easily done when you need to use it. The Telesupport Group is an easy way to get together with others. Please give it a try.

**This is an alert to those in the Salem, Oregon area.** A support group may happen soon. Pennie Weiss is looking for a good place to meet. If you know of a place, please call me at 877-622-6298 so I can get the news to her. A church that would like to host it as a service to their members is often a good location. We have liability insurance if that is requested by locations. I think I'll soon have a meeting place for a group to start in Costa Mesa, California. David Conway is thinking of Sunday afternoon.

Have a grand March,

*Bev*

### 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](http://www.Medicare.gov)

...

#### The Affordable Health Care Act

For current information go to [www.HealthCare.gov](http://www.HealthCare.gov)

...

#### HICAP

#### Health Insurance Counseling

for seniors and people with disabilities.

[www.cahealthadvocates.org](http://www.cahealthadvocates.org)

/HICAP/

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

...

#### Health Rights Hotline

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

Tollfree (888) 354-4474 or TDD (916) 551-2180.

In Sacramento, (916) 551-2100.

[www.hrh.org](http://www.hrh.org).

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#### HMO Help Center

Assistance

24 hours a day, seven days a week.

(888) HMO-2219

or (877) 688-9891 TDD

...

#### 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".

## WESTERN NEUROPATHY ASSOCIATION – CALIFORNIA, NEVADA, OREGON, TEXAS

Yes, Texas is now in the Western Neuropathy Association. As of February 14, 2020, neuropathy support groups in Austin and Houston are now part of WNA. They were groups in the Neuropathy Alliance of Texas, which is dissolving. WNA is delighted to welcome them into our family of support groups as anything west of the Atlantic Ocean we consider to be western and Texas is definitely a western state. There is a good chance there will be a new support group in Dallas soon as we will be looking for leaders in other locations. Texas is a big state and we know there are thousands of people with neuropathy there. It will follow California, Nevada, and Oregon guidelines -- we will start a group when we find a leader and a place to meet.

## 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](http://www.anodynetherapy.com)

### Auburn

#### The Footpath

825 Lincoln Way  
(530) 885-2091  
[www.footpathshoes.com](http://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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## BARTONELLA IS EVERYWHERE, SO WHY DON'T WE KNOW MORE ABOUT IT? By Stephanie Soucheray • December 5, 2013

Bartonella is a bacteria transmitted by fleas, ticks, animals, even spiders, but few people know about it. New methods for diagnosing it are showing it's more common than previously thought.

A North Carolina state professor says Bartonella infection is one of the most important untold medical stories.

Ed Breitschwerdt, a professor of veterinary sciences at North Carolina State University, keeps waiting for the tipping point. For the last 30 years, Breitschwerdt has been studying Bartonella, a genus of bacteria found in animals, ticks, and humans.

"It's frustrating," said Breitschwerdt. "I believed we would hit a tipping point two years ago with this."

Vectors of Bartonella infections include fleas, body lice, and sand flies, as well as animals. Image courtesy Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Is there an image?

Laura Hopper's tipping point came in 2006, when she was 15 years old. The Raleigh, North Carolina, teen lost her peripheral vision. She next began to suffer bouts of joint and muscle pain and numbness in her hands. Then came the headaches, memory loss, and hallucinations.

"As a mother, it's so hard to watch your child have all these symptoms," said Maria Hopper. "It was a couple years of going to all kinds of doctors."

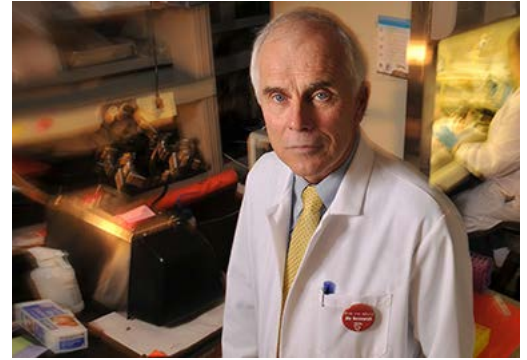
But no neurologist, rheumatologist, or psychiatrist could explain all of Laura's symptoms. And it wasn't until 2008, when the Hoppers read a news article about Bartonella and Breitschwerdt's work, that a lightbulb went off in their heads.

Though people have known of cat scratch disease – the most public of the human diseases caused by Bartonella infection – for more than 100 years, Breitschwerdt said he's convinced that Bartonella is the stealth cause of many neurological, inflammatory, and chronic diseases in humans.

And, unlike Lyme disease, another tick-borne illness that can cause an array of distressing symptoms, Bartonella is right in the backyard of most North Carolinians.

"It's a medically important bacteria in animals and humans in the state. If you took every stray cat along the coast of North Carolina, three quarters of them would have Bartonella," said Breitschwerdt. "That's because the bacteria are commonly transmitted to animals by fleas."

He said that, historically, veterinarians have considered common cat flea a nuisance but have underappreciated it as a disease vector. For several



**Ed Breitschwerdt, DVM, DACVIM**

Professor of medicine and infectious diseases at North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine.

years, Breitschwerdt has seen all sorts of animals, mites, ticks, fleas and even spiders test positive for Bartonella.

"Animals are the primary reservoir for the Bartonella species," he said.

Breitschwerdt has worked with the One Health Commission, a collective that looks at the links between environmental, human, and animal health. Though his professional and personal life has been guided by his care for animals, his most recent work is geared towards detecting and treating Bartonella infection in humans.

### The Recovery Process

The Hoppers contacted Breitschwerdt at a fortunate time: He was developing new human diagnostic method for Bartonella. Laura tested positive and after three courses of months-long antibiotic treatments, her symptoms have all but disappeared.

"By the end of the first cycle [of antibiotics], the feeling in her hands came back," said Maria. "By the end of the second cycle, hallucinations stopped." Though Laura still suffers some muscle pain, she considers herself 80 to 90 percent healed.

If the bacteria are positively detected, treating Bartonella infection is a daunting task for even otherwise healthy patients.

"You cannot float humans or horses in enough Doxycycline to kill this bacteria," said Breitschwerdt. Treatment, such as Laura's, requires weeks of multi-antibiotic therapies.

Dr. Ed Breitschwerdt has found himself on the front lines of an epidemic no one has heard of.

Laura was also lucky in that she tested positive for Bartonella immediately.

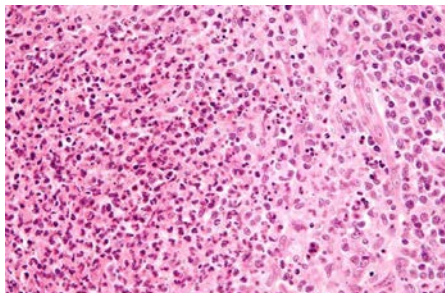
- Continued on page 5

## Bartonella Is Everywhere, So Why Don't We Know More About It? – Continued from page 4

A patient infected can have a negative test on a Monday and positive test by Wednesday.

“People are tested several times, but Bartonella can hide in the body,” Breitschwerdt said.

That’s because an animal scratch or bug bite (or a vet’s needle stick) results in Bartonella infection in red blood cells and endothelial cells, which line blood vessels. The bacteria can “hide out” for many infectious cycles, causing symptoms and eventually affecting every organ system in the body.



Highly magnified image of a lymph node infected with Bartonella henselae. Image courtesy Nephron, Wikimedia Creative Commons

Most people can clear Bartonella from their bloodstreams effectively. But among the subset of people who can’t eliminate the bacteria, help in mainstream medicine will be difficult to come by.

“I often talk with veterinarians who have these vague complaints – who say they’ve been sick for weeks or months,” said Breitschwerdt.

Many of the vets receive diagnoses of Lyme disease, chronic fatigue, rheumatoid arthritis, or are sent to a psychiatrist and told their symptoms are untreated depression. But Breitschwerdt cautions them to get tested for Bartonella.

Breitschwerdt has ventured into industry with Galaxy Diagnostics, a company he founded to offer Bartonella testing kits to doctors. The company launched into human testing two years ago, and has received orders from 300 doctors across the country.

At this stage, said Amanda Elam, Galaxy’s president, the company’s goal is to educate people about Bartonella.

“We’re doing continuing medical education courses, working with people in public health and doing education with veterinarians,” she said. “I’d really like the medical community to keep an open mind about this.” While Breitschwerdt waits for the public tipping point for Bartonella, he said he too is focused on disease education.

“It takes 10 years before something added to the medical textbooks gets widely spread in practice,” he said. “We’re working on changing those textbooks.”

North Carolina Health News press release.

## DISCOUNTS FOR WNA MEMBERS

Continued from page 4

### Neuropathy Support Formula/Nerve Renew

(1-888-840-7142) is a supplement that a sizable 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.

### 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](http://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](http://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 (877) 622-6298 or e-mail [info@pnhelp.org](mailto:info@pnhelp.org).

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

## NEUROPATHY MEDICAL LITERATURE REVIEW By William B. Donovan, M.D.

We can access the National Library of Medicine (NLM) to obtain information on peripheral neuropathy (PN). There are over 100 medical articles a month written on PN.

I review these references and select articles that would appear to be most interesting to us neuropathy sufferers. This is the link to PubMed that will connect to the NLM:

[www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez)

If you are reading this article on the computer, just click on the above link to go there. If you are reading the print edition of the newsletter, type this link into the address bar of the browser on a computer. If you don’t know how, get a librarian or friend to help you.

After you get to PubMed, you will see a line that says “Search PubMed” followed by “for” and a space. Every article in the NLM is given a PMID, an eight digit identification number. I will give you PMID numbers of the selected articles. Type the PMID into the space after the “for” and click on “Go” at the end of the space, or press the ENTER key on your keyboard. You will then see a one paragraph abstract of the article appear, as well as links to related articles.

The reader can also go to the WNA website [www.pnhelp.org](http://www.pnhelp.org), click on the RESOURCES tab and select MEDICAL LITERATURE REVIEW from the menu to review the archive

of summaries that have appeared in this column over recent years.

This month’s PMIDs:

- 29140155 This is a Swedish randomized controlled study culmangafodipir (an antioxidant) used to prevent oxaliplatin-induced neuropathy. There was significantly less cold allodynia and sensory symptoms compared to the control group.
- 30061320 A group of patients with painful diabetic neuropathy was randomly assigned, 63 each, to a twice weekly electroacupuncture and a control group without. Those providing the treatment and patients receiving the treatment were not blinded, but the evaluators were. They found 82.5% improvement versus 34.1% at 9 weeks on completion of the study. Later follow-up showed continued improvement with Pain Intensity Rating Scale at 9.30% compared to 9.30%.
- 30233145 Twelve studies were reviewed that used alpha lipoic acid (ALA) and epalrestat (antidiabetic agent) in the treatment of diabetic peripheral neuropathy. They reported a study that achieved improvement in nerve conduction velocity and total symptom score which could have happened by chance alone in only one out of 10,000. The use of ALA was 300 mg daily and epalrestat 50 mg daily.

## Prescription Medications And Treatments For Nerve Pain – Continued from page 1

- **Combination treatments.** Your doctor might recommend that you use one or two of these treatments together -- an approach called combination therapy. Many studies have shown that combining certain drugs -- often an anticonvulsant and an antidepressant -- has a better effect on nerve pain than either medications alone.

### Three Tips for Taking Nerve Pain Medication

1. **Watch out for interactions.** Before you start taking a new medicine, make sure your doctor knows about every other prescription drug, over the counter medicine, supplement, and vitamin you use. You might want to write them all down and take the list to your appointment -- or even take the pill bottles with you.
2. **Always follow your doctor's instructions for taking a new medicine.** Make sure you understand how often you are to take it, how much you are to take, what time of day you should take it, and whether or not you should take it with food. Never stop using a prescription medicine without talking to your doctor first.
3. **Don't ignore side effects.** Talk to your doctor about them. He or she might be able to alter the dose or change the medicine to resolve the problem.

### Other Treatments for Nerve Pain

While medications are typically the first choice for neuropathic pain, some other approaches might help too. Here are some nondrug options related to electrical stimulation. When you feel nerve pain, an electrical signal is being sent from a damaged nerve to your brain. Some treatments for nerve pain work by sending out their own electrical impulses. These charges seem to interrupt or block the pain signals, reducing the pain you feel.

- **TENS** (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation) is one example of this approach. A small device sends a mild electric current through your skin. While TENS is simple and painless, the evidence that it helps with nerve pain is mixed. However, recent studies do seem to show that it can help

with diabetic nerve pain, so the American Academy of Neurology recommends it.

- **PENS** (percutaneous electrical nerve stimulation) -- also called electroacupuncture -- delivers electrical stimulation to the nerves through acupuncture needles. The American Academy of Neurology deems this probably effective in treating diabetic nerve pain, but the treatment is not widely available.

- **rTMS** (repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation) uses magnets to send electrical impulses into the brain. While evidence is limited, studies suggest that PENS and rTMS may help with nerve pain.

Other methods of electrical stimulation are more complex and require surgery. For instance, spinal cord stimulation involves implanting a device in the body that sends out electrical impulses to the spinal cord. For deep brain stimulation (DBS), a surgeon would implant electrodes in the brain. Generally, doctors only use these invasive approaches when everything else has failed.

### Controlling Nerve Pain

**Nerve pain can be hard to control.** Many studies suggest that many people with nerve pain are not getting sufficient pain relief. However, that doesn't mean you have to accept a life in pain. Experts believe that many of those people in pain could be helped. It's just that they aren't getting the proper treatment. They might be relying on medications that don't work. Or they might be getting the right drugs at the wrong dose.

If you're suffering with neuropathy and/or any other nerve pain and treatment isn't helping enough, don't give up hope. Instead, go back to your doctor and come up with a new approach. Or get a referral to an expert -- like a pain specialist or a neurologist. There are a lot of different ways to tackle nerve pain. If one approach doesn't work, others might. By working with an expert, and being persistent, you can find something that will help.

Used with permission of Sonya Wells a member of the WNA Board of Directors.

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## MEDICATION REPORT

CJ Holliday, who has a web-based support group out of North Carolina, sent this report from Jack Shore's group.

*"I just wanted to pass along something my wife just learned. She had been taking hydro-morphine for several years for pain related to back issues, fibromyalgia and neuropathy.*

*She decided to reduce and go off this drug to get a better hold on her other symptoms which were fogged over because of the drug's strength. She has experienced a dramatic reduction in her symptoms since stopping this drug. Just thought I'd pass this along as it may help others".*

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## BRAIN & LIFE Magazine from the American Academy of Neurology

If you are not receiving Brain & Life, the magazine from the American Academy of Neurology, you should let them know you would like to receive it. Send a note to Brain & Life, PO Box 1908, Lowell, MA 01853-9967 saying you would like the free subscription to this excellent magazine because

you have peripheral neuropathy or are the caregiver, relative, or friend of someone who has it. Indicate if you want it by mail or email. If you have an email address include it along with your name and address. If you would like it in a Spanish print edition, mention that.



# WESTERN NEUROPATHY ASSOCIATION

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

## NEUROPATHY NOW

**Date: Thursday, May 7, 2020**

**Time: 10:00 AM – 3:15 PM**

**Pre-register By:**

**Tuesday, April 20, 2018**

Seating is limited. Must register in advance.

**Registration Fee: \$25.00**

**Location:**

**KVIE, 2030 W. Camino Avenue,  
Sacramento, CA 95833**

**Questions?**

**Toll-free: (888) 556-3356**

**E-mail: [lindsayc@pnhelp.org](mailto:lindsayc@pnhelp.org)**

*Sponsor*



Register online at  
[www.WNAinfo.org](http://www.WNAinfo.org)

# Western Neuropathy Association 2020 Annual Medical Conference

- 9:00am **Registration check-in** (must register in advance; limited seating)  
Morning snacks and coffee included
- 10:00am **Conference Opens : Announcements and Introductions**
- 10:10am **Keynote Speaker** – to be announced
- 11:00am **Break**
- 11:10am **Dominick Spatafora, President, Neuropathy Action Foundation**  
**“Knowing Autoimmune Neuropathies”**
- Catered Lunch**  
Awards | Visit Exhibitors
- 1:00pm **Reports from Exhibitors”**
- 1:30pm **Amyloidosis Neuropathy** – Alnylum Speaker
- 2:00pm **Cindy B. McReynolds**  
Report from Dr. Hammock’s EicOsis Team about the Clinical Trial for EC5026
- 2:45pm **Raffle Prizes, Silent Auction, Evaluation, Closing Announcements**
- 3:15pm **Close of Conference**

Schedule of events is subject to change.  
More information will be available in the next newsletter and online at [www.WNAinfo.org](http://www.WNAinfo.org)



**Mail registration fee and form to:**

**WNA  
PO Box 276567  
Sacramento, CA 95827**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City / State / Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Support Group \_\_\_\_\_  At Large Member

If you need a special diet, please indicate:  Vegetarian  Gluten Free  Other

I am enclosing my check for the \$25 registration fee (includes lunch and morning snacks).



# WESTERN NEUROPATHY ASSOCIATION

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Call WNA using our toll free phone numbers:

**(877) 622-6298** ■ Email: [info@WNAinfo.org](mailto:info@WNAinfo.org)

■ PN Information/Advice ■ Support Group Inquiries

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## 2020 Annual Western Neuropathy Conference

Thursday, May 7, 2020

at KVIE, Public Television, Sacramento

Registration Form on page 7. Plan on joining us!

## UCDAVIS HEALTH – ALPHA STEM CELL CLINIC

CIRM – California’s Stem Cell Agency

Alpha Stem Cell Clinic Network Symposium

Progress Developing Stem Cell Treatments and Cures

May 1, 2020 8:30 am – 3:30 pm



The CIRM-FUNDED Alpha Stem Cell Clinics are a network of leading California medical centers. The Network specializes in delivering stem cell and gene therapy clinical trials to patients. The key to the Network’s success is the ability to accelerate

the delivery of treatments to patients through partnerships with patients, medical providers and clinical trial sponsors.

Every year CIRM sponsors a public conference to educate, explore key issues in this developing field, and highlight results in the pursuit of stem cell and gene therapies becoming standard of care. May 1, 2020, Sacramento’s UC Davis Health will host CIRM’s 5th annual Alpha Stem Cell Clinic Network Symposium.

**Register for free here:** <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/cirm-asccl-symposium-2020-progress-developing-stem-cell-treatments-and-cures-tickets-84638904241>



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# Join Us!

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### Western Neuropathy Association (WNA)

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tax-exempt corporation.

Bev Anderson, Editor

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WNA Headquarters: [admin@WNAinfo.org](mailto:admin@WNAinfo.org)

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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