

The New York Arthritis Reporter

Arthritis Foundation, Inc., New York Chapter • 122 East 42nd Street • New York, New York 10168-1898 • (212) 984-8700



Stress and Coping

“What all of us need to remember is that there are going to be times in our lives when we’re feeling stressed. The key to successful coping is to make sure that even during those stressful periods, you are finding the time to take care of yourself,” says Dr. Victoria M. Rizzo, Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Hartford Geriatric Social Work Faculty Scholar, & Hartford Partnership Program Director from the Columbia University School of Social Work.

Unfortunately, many of us forget Dr. Rizzo’s suggestion to take care of ourselves during stressful times, making coping more difficult. We often do not get enough sleep and forget to eat well and exercise. We may withdraw from our friends or social situations—all behaviors that can further contribute to our level of stress. In addition, people who suffer from arthritis or other chronic pain conditions are confronting the difficulties of managing daily pain *as well as* the current stresses of daily life.

Many people often ask the question, “Which comes first—the pain or the stress?” Although we may never be able to answer that question for every individual, what we do know is that pain and stress often go hand-in-hand and occur in a cyclical fashion: pain can create stress and stress can lead to more

pain. The key is to treat the pain *and* confront the stress. Although this can be a difficult task, there are some suggested strategies to use for when the going gets tough.

“The first thing to do if you are feeling tense or stressed is to **listen to your body’s signals**,” says Dr. Rizzo. “If you are feeling tired all of the time or don’t have the energy or interest in participating in your usual activities, your body is likely telling you something.” Many people with arthritis also find that increased joint pain or flare-ups can be a good indicator of stressful times, illustrating the need for developing more effective coping strategies.

The next step is to **pinpoint the cause of the stress**. Dr. Rizzo explains, “A good way to figure out what is triggering your stress, and potentially contributing to your increased joint pain, is to keep a daily log for at least a week.” Your log can include specific information about how you are feeling, whether you are feeling particularly stressed or anxious, what you are doing at that time and the level of joint pain that you are experiencing. By keeping this type of log, you will likely be able to identify triggers that create stress, which will allow you to begin confronting and managing those issues.

Once you have identified the triggers for your stress, you can begin to strategize about ways to make things better. Goals can include:

- **Changing the situation**—Although it is not always possible to change an entire situation that creates stress in your life, sometimes you are able to make small changes that make a big difference.
- **Changing your outlook/eliminating any self-defeating thoughts**—Often when we are stressed or overwhelmed, we doubt ourselves or assume that we won’t be able to get through it. If we change the self-defeating tape that replays in our head to one which is positive and supportive, we can do wonders for ourselves.
- **Finding an effective way to relieve the stress**—Every individual has a different way to relieve stress. This may include complementary therapy techniques such as meditation, visualization or diaphragmatic breathing or may simply involve taking a short walk to relax.

Dr. Rizzo explains, “While each of us must find the best strategies to calm ourselves during stressful times, there are some coping tools, such as having a social support system in place (such as friends and family) and

(Continued on page 2)

Centocor Expands Support

Since 2000, **Centocor** has been an important partner in the Chapter’s delivery of disease management and educational programs. This year, Centocor has expanded its efforts by funding a variety of projects including *Arthritis Basics for Change*, four community symposia on rheumatoid arthritis, the *New York Arthritis Exchange* and newer initiatives such as the *Worksite Wellness Series* and public education forums on psoriatic arthritis and ankylosing spondylitis.

The Chapter is grateful to Centocor for its ongoing commitment and generous support of these diverse community outreach efforts throughout the region.

This issue is underwritten by an educational grant from Wyeth.

This fall, the Chapter will be holding two **Kids Get Arthritis, Too Family Days** in our region. These exciting programs offer children with arthritis and their families an opportunity to hear from leading health professionals in the field as well as learn from each other through fun and educational activities. Please join us at the following events:



September 26th
The Armory Track
216 Forth Washington Avenue
New York, NY 10032

Thanks to an educational grant from **Wyeth**, the Chapter is pleased to host this program at the New Balance Track and Field Center at the Armory, which is the premier indoor track and field center in America. Lecture topics for parents will include *Soothing Your Child's Pain*, *Healthy Eating and Understanding Your Child's Educational Rights*. Children will participate in activities including yoga, pilates and martial arts. Families will participate in fun track and field activities, take a run on "The Fastest Track in the World" and receive a personalized certificate signed by Dr. Norbert Sander, the president of The Armory Foundation, and the only New York City resident to have won the ING NYC Marathon. This is sure to be a great event that you won't want to miss.

November 8th
Brooklyn Children's Museum
145 Brooklyn Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11213

Through the generous support of **Amgen**, the Chapter will be conducting this program at the Brooklyn Children's Museum, the first museum that was created expressly for children when it was founded in 1899. Featuring award-winning, hands-on exhibits and learning adventures, the museum is the perfect place for children to learn while having a great time! Parents will participate in educational lectures, while kids will have the opportunity to explore the museum.

Stay tuned for more information about an additional *Kids Get Arthritis, Too Family Day* to be held in Westchester. To register or obtain more information about these events, please contact Ayana Woods at ayanawoods@arthritis.org or (212) 984-8730.

Additional Partners for the New York Arthritis Exchange

The Chapter is pleased to announce the co-sponsorship of the **New York Arthritis Exchange** by **Bristol-Myers Squibb**, **Centocor**, **Hoffman-La Roche Inc.** and **UCB**. These sponsors have come together to support one of the Chapter's most critical services provided to the community. Now in its 14th year, the *Exchange* is the Chapter's award-winning telephone hotline for people seeking information about arthritis. Callers can request information about upcoming programs, physician referral lists, FREE printed educational publications and details about a variety of patient services in the area. Staffed by health professionals and trained volunteers, this hotline is an invaluable resource for New Yorkers living with arthritis. To reach the *Exchange*, call (212) 984-8730 or from the 914 and 845 area codes only, call (800) 246-2884.

Stress and Coping (continued from page 1)

participating in some form of exercise, that are highly recommended." Unfortunately, many people who suffer from joint pain have difficulty getting around and may therefore be less likely to participate in social and/or physical activities. If that is the case, a good starting strategy is to set small, attainable goals and build upon them.

One simple way to increase your social activity and exercise is by joining an *Arthritis Foundation Life Improvement Series* class at a nearby community site. Classes include the



Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program, *Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program* or the *Arthritis Foundation Self Help Program*. Some facilities also offer the *Arthritis Foundation Tai Chi Program*.

According to Dr. Rizzo, who has been an evaluation consultant for the New York Chapter since 2002, "These programs have been proven to not only improve your overall physical health, but participants also show improvements in their mental health status and quality of life. The classes also provide a community of people who can understand what you are going through and share tips and strategies on ways they have battled their own stressors."

It is important to remember that everyone deals with stressful situations. However, if you feel as though your stress is preventing you from enjoying your usual activities or impacting your life in other serious ways, you should make sure to see your physician as soon as possible. Remember, improvements in your mental health can have a significant and positive impact on your overall physical health.

For more information on coping and arthritis or to request a copy of our free brochure, *Managing Your Stress*, please contact the **New York Arthritis Exchange** telephone helpline at (212) 984-8730, or from the 914 or 845 area codes only, (800) 246-2884.



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Take Control. We Can Help™

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Copies of our financial and operating report have been filed with the state and are available upon request. To obtain one, write: Office of the Attorney General, Department of Law, Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271, or contact us at the address above.

Sylvia Greenspan remembered the Chapter in her will with a bequest of \$10,000

A distribution of \$150,000 from the estate of Ida Miller will support programs for people with arthritis.

Arthritis Connections Seminar Series

Thanks to the generous support of **Amgen**, the Chapter has launched a new seminar series called *Arthritis Connections* featuring lectures on a variety of chronic physical and mental conditions that are known to be associated with arthritis. Over recent years, evidence has shown that people with rheumatoid arthritis are more likely to have heart disease, diabetes, depression and osteoporosis than those not suffering from arthritis. This clearly indicates a need for people with arthritis to follow guidelines and be dedicated to maintaining a healthy weight, engaging in physical activity and caring for their heart and joint health. This lecture series will provide valuable information to people living with arthritis and a co-existing condition as well as those who have arthritis and are at a higher risk for developing an additional chronic illness.

The first seminar of the series, **Arthritis & Depression**, will take place on **October 26th** from **6:00-7:30 PM** at the White Plains Library, 100 Martine Avenue, White Plains, New York. Future programs will be held in Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens. For more information, please contact ayanawoods@arthritis.org or call (212) 984-8730.

Questions and Answers

Patricia Marino, PhD is an Assistant Professor of Psychology in Psychiatry at the Weill Cornell Medical College and a practicing clinical psychologist.

Q: Many people speak about the link between depression, anxiety and chronic pain. Are depression and anxiety considered to be two parts of the same condition?

A: While depression and anxiety are not considered to be the same clinical condition, they often go hand-in-hand. Research suggests that individuals with chronic pain often have higher rates of depression. If somebody with chronic pain develops depression (see box), they may also begin to worry about things that they may not have focused on in the past, i.e. "What if my pain gets worse or never goes away?" or "What if I'm like this forever?" which can ultimately create increased anxiety. Since perceptions of pain can sometimes be heightened when someone is dealing with depression, it is critical to treat both the depression and the anxiety, as well as the pain, in order to improve a person's quality of life.

Q: You describe pain and depression as often being directly linked. Can you expand upon this?

A: Pain and depression often appear in a cyclic pattern: the more depressed people get, the more pain they may experience; the more pain they experience, the more depression they have. In addition, when people are depressed, they are often less motivated to follow any of the recommendations from their doctors—for instance: sticking to a physical therapy routine or making sure to get daily exercise. By not participating in these activities, an individual will likely experience more pain, causing the cycle to continue.

Q: So, how do you break the depression/pain cycle?

A: One of the first steps toward breaking the cycle is to seek help for your depression. Just as you would obtain medical treatment to manage your pain, it is important to speak about your concerns with a professional that you trust. There are many treatment options for people suffering from depression including:

- psychotherapy
- participation in a support group
- taking anti-depressant medications

I often tell patients that if they are feeling depressed, but don't know where to turn, a good place to start is with a physician that they have been regularly seeing (i.e. a primary care physician or a rheumatologist). That doctor should either be able to address the depression directly or point them in the right direction toward getting the help they need.

Q: Do you recommend any specific type of professional treatment for depression?

A: It is important to remember that every person is unique and may benefit from different types of interventions and treatments. However, one type of psychotherapy that is often extremely helpful for individuals suffering from chronic pain and depression

is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). CBT specifically helps people identify ineffective thinking patterns that might be associated with their depression and/or pain. For example, someone who is experiencing pain may think, "I'm never going to feel any better, so why should I bother exercising?" Unfortunately, this may lead to more pain. CBT helps people to identify that their thinking patterns may actually stand as a barrier to successfully managing their pain and can help individuals create beneficial behavioral changes.

Q: What other ways are there to address depression and anxiety?

A: One thing that can be very effective in addressing depression is for people to structure their time and plan pleasant events for themselves every day. Pleasant events can include: reading a book, making a telephone call to a friend, meditating or even taking a walk. Of course, people should select these events based on their own capabilities. Other important tips for coping with depression and anxiety include:

- Making sure that you are getting enough sleep every night
- Eating a well-balanced, nutritious diet
- Incorporating fun activities and exercise into your daily routine

Q: Are depression and anxiety considered to be a "normal" part of the aging process?

A: On the contrary, depression and anxiety are not a normal part of *any* process! If you are experiencing more symptoms of depression than you have in the past and you are finding that your ability or desire to participate in your normal activities is being affected, it is critical that you speak with your physician about receiving treatment. Although being treated for your depression may not make all of your pain go away, it will likely help you to better manage your pain and improve your overall quality of life.

Upcoming Programs

September 24th

3:00 – 5:00 PM

**Let's Move Together:
Belly Dancing**

Moonheart Healing Arts Center
New York, NY

Sponsored by New York City Council

October 7th

1:00 – 3:00 PM

Mind Body Approaches to Arthritis

JCC of Rockland
West Nyack, NY

October 8th

5:00 – 7:00 PM

**Let's Move Together:
Modern Classical Dance**

Dance Theater Workshop
New York, NY

Sponsored by New York City Council

October 20th

10:30 – 11:30 PM

Let's Move Together: Ballroom Dancing

Chelsea Dance Studios
New York, NY

Sponsored by New York City Council

October 22nd

6:00 – 8:00 PM

Queens Leaders' Award Reception

Whitestone, Queens

October 24th

10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Charles Christian Symposium

NYU Farkas Auditorium
New York, NY

November 11th

1:00 – 2:00 PM

Yoga and Arthritis

JCC Rockland
West Nyack, NY

For further information, call the **New York Arthritis Exchange** at (212) 984-8730 or, from the 914 and 845 area codes only, (800) 246-2884.

The estate of Norma Risman made a bequest of \$32,105 to the Chapter.

How Do I Know if I'm Depressed?

Symptoms of depression include:

- Persistent sad, anxious or "empty" feelings
- Feelings of hopelessness and/or pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness and/or helplessness
- Irritability, restlessness
- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable, including sex
- Fatigue and decreased energy
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering details and making decisions
- Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping
- Overeating, or appetite loss
- Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts
- Persistent aches or pains, headaches, cramps or digestive problems that do not ease with treatment.

If you have experienced any of these symptoms for more than two weeks, or are finding that they are interfering with your daily activities, it is important to speak to your physician about receiving treatment as soon as possible.

Source: The National Institute of Mental Health at www.nimh.nih.gov



Meet Our Fellows

Since 1953, the New York Chapter has been a leader in sponsoring young rheumatologists from the United States and around the world. Many of these research fellows have gone on to receive competitive National Institutes of Health grants and have become influential in the field of rheumatology. By supporting these young professionals, the Chapter promotes innovation in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of all forms of arthritis.

This year, the Chapter has awarded research fellowships to four physicians from leading medical institutions in the region. With a specific focus on inflammatory arthritis, these young investigators are expanding the breadth of knowledge and research in the field.

Jessica Gordon, MD

from the Hospital for Special Surgery is examining the impact of imatinib (a type of medication commonly used for cancer treatment) on scleroderma, an autoimmune disease typically characterized by skin thickening and tightness, fibrosis of internal organs, Raynaud's phenomenon, severe pain, decreased mobility as well as arthritis. By studying the ways in which imatinib works on a cellular level, Dr. Gordon hopes to better define its role in the treatment for this condition as well as examine other potential treatment options.



Jose U. Scher, MD

from the NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases will be studying the link between smoking and the development of rheumatoid arthritis (RA). Specifically, Dr. Scher will be examining the connection



between smoking and the activation of a specific type of T-cell lymphocyte, TH17, a type of pro-inflammatory white blood cell that has been previously linked to RA.

Two of our researchers this year come from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine: **Anna Broder, MD** and **Irene Blanco, MD**.

Anna Broder, MD

is studying the role of vitamin D in the development of rheumatoid arthritis and lupus. By comparing vitamin D levels among African American and Hispanic patients with these conditions, Dr. Broder intends to estimate the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in these populations and study the potential risk factors involved in developing this deficiency. In addition, Dr. Broder plans to examine whether there is a correlation between vitamin D levels and disease activity patterns in people living with lupus.



In her research, **Irene Blanco, MD**, is hoping to promote the early detection and treatment of lupus nephritis (an inflammation of the kidney caused by systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), a disease of the immune system) by examining the current screening procedures for the condition and determining more precise screening recommendations for the future.



The Chapter is dedicated to supporting innovative research projects such as these and will continue to do so in an effort to bring about new developments in the prevention and treatment of inflammatory arthritis and other related conditions.

Dates to Remember

Hospital for Special Surgery

535 East 70th St, New York NY 10021
RLM conference center.
Pre-registration with the Hospital for Special Surgery is required.
To register, please call 212.774.2793

October 6th

3:00 - 4:30 PM

Living with Osteoarthritis

October 15th

3:00 - 4:30 PM

Steps to Better Bones

November 19th

5:30 - 6:30 PM

Joint Pain: When is it Time to Consult My Doctor?

(Annual Chickie Goldstein Memorial Lecture)

September 30th

10:30 - 11:30 AM

Living with Chronic Arthritis: Surgical and Non-Surgical Options

Physical Therapy at Jefferson Valley

600 Bank Road
Jefferson Valley, NY 10535
Call to register 914-245-8807 x 11215

October 15th

4:00 - 5:00 PM

Stretch Your Way into Wellness

October 28th

8:00 - 9:00 PM

Treatment and Prevention of Neck Injuries

Physical Therapy at Briarcliff

584 North State Road
Briarcliff Manor, NY 10510
Call to register 914-762-2222 x 2132

October 8th

7:00 - 8:00 PM

Causes and Prevention of Back Pain

October 27th

7:00 - 8:00 PM

Osteoporosis and Exercise

December 17th

7:00 - 8:00 PM

Causes and Prevention of Knee Injuries in the Gym

Programs require pre-registration. For further information, call the **New York Arthritis Exchange** at (212) 984-8730 or, from the 914 and 845 area codes only, (800) 246-2884.

Esther Chadwick remembered the Chapter in her will with a bequest of \$2,113.

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- Arthritis Advocates in Action
- Advocacy News
- New Brochures
- Kids Get Arthritis, Too
- Research Update
- The New York Arthritis Reporter
- Información en español



Please visit us at our website at:
<http://newyork.arthritis.org>

In the Next Issue: Osteoarthritis



This holiday season, the sound of bells will ring through the air as people across the country tie jingle bells to their sneakers and join in the **Jingle Bell Run/Walk for Arthritis**. The Jingle Bell Run/Walk is a national event for the Arthritis Foundation where thousands of people come together to run, walk and raise money to help fight arthritis in more than 200 cities.

After last year's success, the New York Chapter is excited to announce that it will host its 2nd Annual

Jingle Bell Run/Walk for Arthritis on **Sunday, December 6th** at Prospect Park in Brooklyn, New York. Jingle Bell Run/Walk is a holiday-themed event complete with awards, costume contests, entertainment and lots of fun. Participants have the option of a 5K run or 3K walk and everyone receives a commemorative long-sleeved t-shirt and jingle bells for their shoes.

We hope you join us for this fun and exciting event. For more information, please contact Jennifer Villa Kearins at (212) 984-8708 or jkearins@arthritis.org. To sign up, please visit: www.jinglebellbrooklyn.com today! It's not too early to join the fun!