



WRSO Newsletter

WOLVERHAMPTON RHEUMATOLOGY SUPPORT GROUP

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CARING IS SHARING

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WRSO Annual General Meeting

The WRSO AGM was held at the Holly Bush, Penn Road on the 10th September. There was no charge for the event which was well attended. We held a raffle which raised £85. The Holly Bush allowed us to use the room without charge. The Minutes of the AGM, the Chair/Secretaries report and the Annual Accounts will be included with the November newsletter.

Christmas event at Shugborough Hall

Sheila Fardoe is arranging a Christmas Festivities visit to Shugborough Hall on the evening of Thursday 6th December. The cost is £12 per person which includes the coach and admission. We leave Falkland Street Coach Park at 4.00p.m and leave Shugborough at 9.00 p.m



Iris and Reg surrounded by the Tombola prizes.

Carver Wolverhampton City Marathon

The Marathon was on Sunday 2nd September. Thank you to Iris Kruczek and Reg Jones who did a Tombola stall and raised £80. Chris Dodd ran the Half Marathon on behalf of the WRSO in a time of 1 Hour, 59 minutes and 1 second. Thank you and well done Chris! Chris will present a cheque to the WRSO when he has collected in all the sponsorship money.

One of the criteria of becoming beneficiaries of the Marathon was that we had to supply at least 20 marshals. Our sincere thanks go to all our marshals because without them we could not receive the money.

I attended a de briefing meeting on the 24th September. The presentation of the cheques will take place in December in the Mayor's Parlour at the Civic Centre and I will let you know how much we receive.

Turkey and tinsel in Western Super Mare

Joyce Knibbs is organising a turkey and tinsel holiday in Western Super Mare. We are going to the Smiths Hotel from Monday, 29th October to Friday, 2nd November. The cost of the holiday is £190 per person.

Christmas Coffee Morning

Our Christmas coffee morning has been arranged for Monday, 10th December at the Holly Bush, Penn Road, Wolverhampton from 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. We will provide Tea and coffee, squash and mince pies. There will be no charge for the event. We will hold a raffle. The raffle prizes are mounting up thanks to Margaret Yeomans and other members. We will also have a "bring and buy" sales table but the aim of the coffee morning is the same as last year. We just want to meet and have a chat and hopefully a laugh. Invitations will be enclosed with the November newsletter. You may wish to stay for lunch because the Holly Bush has a very varied, reasonably priced menu.

THE MAKEOVER

A middle-aged woman had a heart attack and was taken to the hospital. While on the operating table, she had a near death experience. Seeing God, she asked, "Is my time up?" God said, "No, you have another 43 years, 2 months and 8-days to live." Upon recovery, the woman decided to stay in the hospital and have a facelift, liposuction, and a tummy tuck. She even had a hairdresser come in and give her a permanent and a color rinse. Since she had so much more time to live, she figured she might as well make the most of it. After her last operation, she was released from the hospital. While crossing the street on her way home, she was killed by a truck. Arriving in front of God, she asked, "I thought you said I had another 40 years to live. Why didn't you pull me from the path of that truck?" God replied, "I didn't recognize you."

A Lasting Friendship

Dear Dorothy,
I just want to write and say how much I enjoy Brenda Mullaney's poems. They bring out all kinds of emotions, funny, happy, nostalgic and sometimes sad. I particularly liked the recent one about shoes. It brought back very happy memories for me. In our heyday Brenda and I used to go dancing at the Civic Hall and I can remember very well how we suffered with our shoes. Many a time we have walked bare foot, not to mention the stiletto heels that used to break! If there wasn't a taxi available we would go to the Wimpy Bar (the first in Wolverhampton) walking there bare footed and having a wimpy and coffee until the taxi queue had gone down, (that's if we weren't lucky enough to get a lift), how trusting we were in those days! Anyway Brenda, thank you for the poems and keep them up, you really have a talent! Vivien Worrall (nee Jones)

JOHNIE

Jenny and I sitting on the back doorstep,
Johnie strumming his old guitar,
Bare brown limbs in the sun,
The hum of a distant car

Johnie played an old blues song,
And Jenny and I sang too,
How our voices soared that day,
But mine with love its true.

Mom had made an apple pie,
So Johnie stayed for tea,
I sat next to Johnie,
While Jenny glared at me.

Later on as the sun went down
Johnie and I took my puppy a walk,
Johnie put his hand in mine,
We didn't need to talk.

Memories now come flooding back,
Of that perfect day,
But life goes on and Johnie was gone,
How I prayed that he could stay.

Sorry Dorothy just a sec while I dry my
tears
Luv Bren

I received another letter about the poetry from Brenda from Margaret Wall.

Margaret said the poem about the Titanic reminded her of her struggle with life. Margaret says she went down faster than the Titanic in 2003 and is still trying to raise the old ship. Margaret says her body has been like a hospital ship, a cargo ship, a hardship and the best description is a battleship. Margaret says the figure head is damaged so it will not guide this ship across stormy seas and all it needs is stronger supports then this ship will be turned into a pleasure cruiser. Margaret ends the letter with "thank you Brenda"

INNER STRENGTH

If you can start the day without caffeine or pep pills,
If you can be cheerful, ignoring aches and pains,
If you can resist complaining and boring people with your troubles,
If you can eat the same food everyday and be grateful for it,
If you can understand when loved ones are too busy to give you time,
If you can overlook when people take things out on you when, through no fault of yours, something goes wrong,
If you can take criticism and blame without resentment,
If you can face the world without lies and deceit,
If you can conquer tension without medical help,
If you can relax without liquor,
If you can sleep without the aid of drugs,
Then.....you are probably a dog.

---oo0oo---

A man goes into a pet shop and walks up to the counter.

"Yes, sir, can I help you?" asks the assistant.

"I'd like a wasp, please", said the man.

"You'd like a WHAT, sir?" asks the assistant, looking puzzled.

"I'd like a WASP, please", he repeats.

"I'm sorry sir; we don't sell wasps in here."

"Well, there's one in the window ..."

Rob Marris MP wrote to me enclosing the following press release:

Response of Carers UK to Gordon Brown's announcement of a new Standing

Commission on Carers

Chief Executive of Carers UK Imelda Redmond says:

"How we support carers is one of the great challenges facing our society. As the population ages and more people are living with disabilities, most of us will at some point need to provide care to a family member, friend or neighbour. Currently, too, many carers are risking their own health, income and future prospects, despite fulfilling this crucial role in society.

Carers UK is therefore delighted that Gordon Brown has given carers such a high profile and that he has set up this new Commission. The Prime Minister's meeting with Carers UK member, Jill Pay, and her family in February this year when he launched the review of the National Carers Strategy has obviously had a lasting impact on him. Carers around the country will be encouraged that their concerns are being listened to.

The Commission will have a vital role to play in the coming years. We need to constantly evaluate new evidence and new policies to support carers. We need to find long-term solutions to prevent poor health, poverty and social isolation. Society is changing, yet many of our policies for carers were designed in the 1970s. A Standing Commission is the best way to bring in new ideas and devise new solutions.

One of the key areas that the Commission should look at is the financial support available to carers. The benefit system currently does not support carers to work and condemns many to poverty. We need a radical overhaul of the benefits system and the ways in which we support carers to remain in work.

I am delighted that Philippa Russell will be taking this proposal forward alongside Minister for Carers, Ivan Lewis MP. Philippa has been an outstanding advocate for carers and I know she will relish this new challenge." 04/09/2007

This article was written for people at work but I think many of our members spend quite a bit of time sitting and I know this applies to me on this computer.

Sitting straight 'bad for backs'

Sitting up straight is not the best position for office workers, a study has suggested. Scottish and Canadian researchers used a new form of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to show it places an unnecessary strain on your back.

They told the Radiological Society of North America that the best position in which to sit at your desk is leaning slightly back, at about 135 degrees.

Experts said sitting was known to contribute to lower back pain.

Data from the British Chiropractic Association says 32% of the population spends more than 10 hours a day seated. Half do not leave their desks, even to have lunch.

Two thirds of people also sit down at home when they get home from work.

Spinal angles .

The research was carried out at Woodend Hospital in Aberdeen, Scotland.

Twenty two volunteers with healthy backs were scanned using a positional MRI machine, which allows patients the freedom to move - so they can sit or stand - during the test.

Traditional scanners mean patients have to lie flat, which may mask causes of pain that stem from different movements or postures. In this study, the patients assumed three different sitting positions: a slouching position, in which the body is hunched forward as if they were leaning over a desk or a video game console, an upright 90-degree sitting position; and a "relaxed" position where they leaned back at 135 degrees while their feet remained on the floor.

The researchers then took measurements of spinal angles and spinal disk height and movement across the different positions. Spinal disk movement occurs when weight-bearing strain is placed on the spine, causing the disk to move out of place. Disk movement was found to be most pronounced with a 90-degree upright sitting posture.

It was least pronounced with the 135-degree posture, suggesting less strain is placed on the spinal disks and associated muscles and tendons in a more relaxed sitting position. The "slouch" position revealed a reduction in spinal disk height, signifying a high rate of wear and tear on the lowest two spinal levels.

When they looked at all test results, the researchers said the 135-degree position was the best for backs, and say this is how people should sit.

'Tendency to slide'

Dr Waseem Bashir of the Department of Radiology and Diagnostic Imaging at the University of Alberta Hospital, Canada, who led the study, said: "Sitting in a sound anatomic position is essential, since the strain put on the spine and its associated ligaments over time can lead to pain, deformity and chronic illness."

Rishi Loatey of the British Chiropractic Association said: "One in three people suffer from lower back pain and to sit for long periods of time certainly contributes to this, as our bodies are not designed to be so sedentary."

Levent Caglar from the charity BackCare, added: "In general, opening up the angle between the trunk and the thighs in a seated posture is a good idea and it will improve the shape of the spine, making it more like the natural S-shape in a standing posture. "As to what is the best angle between thigh and torso when seated, reclining at 135 degrees can make sitting more difficult as there is a tendency to slide off the seat: 120 degrees or less may be better."

Story from BBC NEWS:

What is the NHS Care Records Service?

The NHS in England is introducing the NHS Care Records Service (NHS CRS). This is to improve the safety and quality of your care. Over time, the NHS CRS will begin to provide healthcare staff with quicker access to reliable information about you to help with your treatment, including in an emergency. It is likely that your GP or consultant already uses a computer system to keep notes of appointments they have with you, plus medicines prescribed, test results and details of any referrals to other health professionals. X-rays and scans are also increasingly held on computers rather than sheets of film. The NHS Care Records Service will make caring for you across organizational boundaries safer and more efficient. It will also give you access to your record that covers your care across different organizations, such as the GP practice and the hospital.

The purpose of NHS CRS is to allow information about you to be accessed more quickly, and gradually to phase out paper and film records which can be more difficult to access.

Why do we need the NHS Care Records Service?

Anyone in the NHS who provides you with care has to make a record of the treatment they have provided, either on paper or computer. But if this information is needed by a doctor or other health care professional elsewhere in the NHS, it can usually only be shared by letter, email, fax or phone. Even having appointments in different departments of the same hospital can mean having to wait for piles of paper records to be transferred from one place to another. Doctors may have to take up valuable time during a consultation, asking patients questions which have already been answered elsewhere.

At times, the process can be slow and sometimes things get lost on the way.

When will my records become part of the NHS Care Records Service?

A Public Information Programme will inform patients when Summary Care Records are coming to their area.

Until your local Primary Care Trust or GP surgery write to you to tell you that they are

planning to start using the NHS Care Records Service, then there is no need for you to do anything. After you receive your information pack, you will have plenty of time to get informed and make decisions about what information you wish to share.

What will change?

A key part of the NHS Care Records Service will be the gradual development of a **Summary Care Record**. This will be available to NHS staff involved in your care, anywhere in the country. The NHS is beginning to create Summary Care Records now. It will be several years before everyone has one. **Detailed Records** In addition, NHS organizations which normally work together in a local area - such as hospitals, clinics and GPs - are gradually being linked electronically. This will mean that instead of having separate records in all the different places where you receive care, staff caring for you have access to the information they need.

Are my records safe?

By law, everyone working for or on behalf of the NHS must respect your confidentiality and keep all information about you secure. All health records are private and personal, so it is the top priority of the NHS to make the process of accessing your electronic information secure.

The NHS Care Records Service will use the strongest national and international security measures for handling your information. These measures make sure that your information is stored safely, stays private and is accessed appropriately.

You have the right to expect your health information to be kept private.

You also have rights to confidentiality under data protection, human rights legislation and the common law. In every place where the NHS treats you, there are people who are responsible for looking after patient confidentiality. They are sometimes known as Caldicott Guardians.

Your rights to privacy and the commitment of the NHS to protect them are detailed in the leaflet entitled,

'The Care Record Guarantee: our guarantee for NHS Care Records in England'.

I read the following article in the Wolverhampton Chronicle. I have had several falls since developing rheumatoid arthritis. I was 67 in September and do not really feel old enough to ask for this help but I must swallow my pride because I know I am unsteady on my feet. I decided to give the team a call and received a questionnaire in the first instance.

CUT RISK OF FALLING

ANYONE aged 65 or over has a one-in-three chance of falling at some time during the next year possibly causing serious injury and loss of independence as well as a loss of confidence.

Yet many of the causes of slips, trips and falls can be avoided and the award-winning Falls Prevention Service provided by Wolverhampton City Primary Care Trust has more than seven years experience and expertise in preventing older people from falling. Saskia Poller, of the service said: "Falls are very common. They are a major cause of disability in the UK and the greatest cause of death due to injury amongst the over 75s.

Transport

"The service's team of physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nurses and technical instructors aim to give practical help, advice and support to maintain people's quality of life so that they can be more independent and can enjoy greater confidence and dignity. On referral to the service, people complete a questionnaire that enables their risks of falling to be identified so that the most appropriate care can be provided.

This may include the Balanced for life programme, which is a free course of six two-hour sessions over a period of six weeks held in the local community.

Free transport is provided to the venue and then back home. The programme enables people to be further assessed as to their risk of falling and to meet others in similar circumstances.

People also receive information on what help or services are available locally and expert advice on how to reduce their likelihood of falling and how to be as independent as possible.

The programme covers mobility and health checks, healthy eating, and activities to maintain mobility and balance, osteoporosis, hazards in the home, a medication review, how to manage everyday tasks and what to do in the event of a fall.

For more details contact the Falls Prevention service, West Park Rehabilitation Hospital, Park Road West, Wolverhampton WV1 4PW, or call 01902 444502

SLOWING DOWN

I used to rise at 7 30,
Shower, get dressed the lot
Then breakfast, make up and off to work
for nine, and always get there on the dot.

Now as age as taken its toll,
And time has caught up too,
Getting ready takes a couple of hours,
And still find things to do.

There are plasters in abundance for my feet,
They're really bad you know,
With corns, calluses and bunions galore,
And a most painful hammer toe.

Then cream is needed for my heels,
They get really sore you see,
With patchy dry skin on my legs,
And a touch of housemaids knee

Then the teeth come out of the glass,
And I rinse them under the tap,
And what a struggle to get dressed,
I curse this blooming age gap.

I get up at eight most every day,
And start this regime all over again,
When I dare look at the clock,
It's almost going on ten.

So all appointments must be after twelve,
Mornings are not for me,
And when evening comes I'm tired out,
Exhausted frazzled me.

Love to you all
Bren Mullaney

Coping with stress

We do not always realise that we are doing too much. Several of my colleagues tell me that I am doing too much. It would be much easier to cope if my meetings were every other day but it doesn't work out like that. Sometimes I do feel under pressure and stress even though I thoroughly enjoy what I am doing. I think coping with all the meetings and the day itself for the marathon and then preparing for the AGM took its toll.

If only I didn't have rheumatoid arthritis!

Dorothy

Stress is a well-known trigger for depression and it can also affect your physical health. So it's important to identify the causes of stress in your life and try to minimise them.

Any sort of loss, from bereavement, divorce and separation to a child leaving home, causes stress, as do long-term illness and disability. But things such as marriage, moving house, a new job and holidays have quite high stress ratings too.

In work, worrying about deadlines or about not being up to the challenges of a particular task can cause stress.

Symptoms of stress

Some common signs of too much stress include:

Increased irritability

Heightened sensitivity to criticism

Signs of tension, such as nail-biting

Difficulty getting to sleep and early morning waking

Drinking and smoking more

Indigestion

Loss of concentration

It's important to act to relieve damaging stress before it affects your physical or mental health.

Dealing with stress

The secret of managing stress is to look after yourself and, where possible, to remove some of the causes of stress. If you start to feel things are getting on top of you, give yourself some breathing space. Take a day off work, domestic chores, family and everything else that puts pressure on you. Spend the day doing only relaxing things that make you feel good.

It can make all the difference, reducing the threat to your wellbeing.

Some ways to cope with stress:

Accept offers of practical help

Do one thing at a time - don't keep piling stress on stress

Know your own limits - don't be too competitive or expect too much of yourself

Talk to someone

Let off steam in a way that causes no harm (shout, scream or hit a pillow)

Walk away from stressful situations

Try to spend time with people who are rewarding rather than critical and judgmental

Practise slow breathing using the lower part of the lungs

Use relaxation techniques

I hope you like these funny stories

A painting contractor was speaking with a woman about her decorating job. In the first room she said she would like a pale blue. The contractor wrote this down and went to the window, opened it, and yelled out

"green side up!"

In the second room she told the painter she would like it painted in a soft yellow. He wrote this on his pad, walked to the window, opened it, and yelled

"green side up!"

The lady was somewhat curious but she said nothing.

In the third room she said she would like it painted a warm rose color. The painter wrote this down, walked to the window, opened it and yelled

"green side up!"

The lady then asked him, "Why do you keep yelling 'green side up'?"

"I'm sorry," was the reply. "But I have a crew of blondes laying a lawn across the street.

---oo0oo---

Always draw a circle around the ones you love, never draw a heart because hearts can be broken, but circles are never ending.

New programme head announced for Choose and Book

Guy Dickie has been appointed as the new programme head for the national Choose and Book programme.

Guy brings with him a wealth of NHS knowledge and experience in establishing new services in both primary and secondary care and will be leading the national team at NHS Connecting for Health. His role will see him working with clinicians and the NHS to make Choose and Book the everyday method for referring patients. Speaking about his new role Guy commented: "Whilst we aim to increase Choose and Book utilization, what is equally important is the need to stay focused on listening to clinicians and NHS front-line staff, so that each new release of Choose and Book reflects the needs of users. "I am delighted to be joining the team and I am looking forward to guiding the programme to the next level. Choose and Book is now at a stage where we have 100% of PCTs and NHS Acute Trusts live and using the system. "I want to lead the team which sees Choose and Book being used more often, so that it becomes the everyday method for referring patients and a widely-used tool which supports critical NHS reform, such as helping to measure 18 weeks." Guy joined the NHS in March 2003 as a Service Redesign Manager at East Leeds Primary Care Trust (PCT). From this position, he progressed into the role of Head of Commissioning at Leeds North East PCT, where he was the driving force behind the deployment and uptake of Choose and Book for 99 GPs in 24 practices across the PCT. Prior to joining the NHS, Guy had been a Captain with the British Army. He succeeds Tom Denwood, who is currently working on an NHS Connecting for Health secondment project with the Department of Health.

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On a crowded bus, one man noticed that another man was sitting with his eyes closed.

"What's the matter? Are you sick?" he asked.

"No, I'm okay. It's just that I hate to see old ladies standing."

A useful piece of information

We will shortly be going on holiday and I was very surprised when Joyce gave me the following information. If my hearing aids were spoilt by going through this security check it would certainly ruin my holiday.

ARE YOU GOING ON HOLIDAY?

The programming of your digital hearing aids may be affected by the security screens at the airport. When travelling please ensure that you hand your hearing aids, switched off, to the security officials and ask them not to put them through the scanner. Please take a copy of this leaflet to the airport with you.

Using my initiative

Joyce bought me a necklace for my birthday. It is unusual because it doesn't have a fastener which is very useful with my hands. It is made up of beads and magnets and it sticks together to make a necklace or bracelet. I wore it for the AGM and when I took it off I left it on the bedroom radiator shelf. The next morning I accidentally dropped my nail file down the back of the bath making it impossible to reach. Feeling annoyed with myself I walked back into the bedroom and noticed the necklace.

"Ah magnets" I thought.

I took the necklace into the bathroom, dangled it down the back of the bath and sure enough the nail file jumped up onto the magnets. I have said before that you need to figure things out when you have a physical disability!!

Dorothy

I have been asked to enclose a flyer for CTT. This is the company we are going on the Turkey and Tinsel at Western Super Mare with. If you are interested in going on any of the outings or holidays ring the company direct on their Freephone number 0800 916 8856

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