

Summary of the September, 2012 Program

“The Link Between Polio and Diabetes”

Speaker: Bruce Wolosky, DPM, PA

Dr. Bruce Wolosky is our Group’s Podiatrist. He has developed a great interest in Post-Polio. He stated that there is a fine line between Polio and Diabetes as in both, nerves and muscles are affected. Polio used to be the most frequent cause of acute motor peripheral neuropathy. Polio is a viral infection that can lead to paralysis in the arms, legs and diaphragm. Weakness of the joints and muscles creates pain and fatigue which can occur years later after the initial bout of Polio and that is what is called Post-Polio.

The Polio Virus settled in the anterior horn cell which is in the spinal cord. The anterior horn cell is basically the life generator of all muscle control from the spinal cord out. The anterior horn cell relays the information from the brain and spinal cord to the rest of the body, when you lose that ability, muscle strength and coordination are also lost.

Nerves are like electrical wires. with Polio they allow messages to travel from the brain to the outer muscles and the skin and back to the brain not only telling your muscles what to do but, your brain knowing what your muscles and nerves are doing and feeling.

Physical therapy and electrical stimulation is very good for pain management. but, it is very important to be correctly supervised, if inappropriately or excessively applied your condition can worsen. A certain number of motor neurons are killed with the polio virus. The ones that survive take over the muscle function that is left and are taxed more because they have more muscles associated with them and over the years they become weaker and more atrophied. Peripheral Neuropathy in polio patients goes out from the brain and spinal cord to the muscles and nerves causing numbness, weakness, and atrophy.

There is no medicine for post-polio but, nutrition is very important. Nutrition is the cornerstone treatment for any neuropathic condition whether it is polio or diabetes. It is important to keep the nerves as healthy and functional as possible. The way to do that is through proper nutrition. Dr. Wolosky recommends a diet high in fruits and vegetables, and vitamin and mineral supplements especially Vitamin B12, Omega 3 fatty acids and Alpha Lipoic Acid.

Neuropathy can cause foot problems, hammer toes and ulcerations. Dr. Wolosky showed several slides illustrating the problems that can develop in both Polio and Diabetic patients, one of what the nerve actually looks like, and one showing the central nervous system. With Polio some nerves die and others take over to compensate. As time goes by these nerves are overtaxed and they also start to die.

Dr. Wolosky stated that Anodyne therapy can be very helpful in treating neuropathy. Anodyne therapy is an infrared light that is carried to the body through pads placed on the foot. It increases blood flow to the area and anytime you increase blood flow you are increasing your body's ability to wash away any impurities.

Dr. Wolosky showed and explained a plethora of very informative slides illustrating the function of the body's system in both Diabetes and Post-Polio. He concluded by stressing the importance of exercise to keep the blood flowing and to maintain a healthy weight. He then opened to meeting to questions.