

JUNE FOCUS: THE COST OF ARTHRITIS

How much does arthritis cost you?

Did you know that the total financial cost of arthritis in New Zealand is estimated to be \$3.2 billion?

We are not saying this to scare you... ok maybe we are a bit, but you need to know just how expensive this painful disease really is and why we, with your support are fighting so hard to have it recognised as a health priority in New Zealand.

Access Economics was commissioned by Arthritis New Zealand in late 2009 to update our 2005 report 'The Economic Cost of Arthritis in New Zealand' to estimate prevalence and costs of arthritis in New Zealand 2010.

Following are just some of the key findings:

- In 2010, over 530,000 New Zealanders aged 15 or over are living with at least one type of arthritis. This equates to 15.2% of the total population aged 15 or over.
- Over half are female and 54% are of working age (15-64 years).
- Prevalence is expected to grow to over 650,000 people by 2020 largely due to demographic ageing.
- In addition, the burden of disease – the years of healthy life lost because of arthritis – is estimated as 21,491 Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) in 2010.
- People with arthritis are 5% less likely to be employed than those without arthritis, based on New Zealand Health Survey data.
- Over 25,000 New Zealanders will not work in 2010 due to arthritis, costing around \$1.48 billion in lost productivity in 2010.
- In addition, temporary absences from work due to arthritis also impose costs of some \$25m in 2005.
- Together lost production is the largest cost of arthritis, representing nearly half (47%) of the total financial costs in 2010.

- Health sector costs of arthritis are estimated to be \$695m in 2010, 22% of total financial costs.

- Hospital costs represent around one third of health sector costs (\$237m).

- Public inpatient costs are 42% of hospital costs, and are dominated by osteoarthritic knee and hip surgeries.

- Pathology and imaging together are estimated to be 12% of health sector costs.

- In contrast, general practice (GP) and pharmaceutical health sector cost shares are relatively low – 3% and 6% respectively.

- The remaining health costs comprise capital expenditures, expenditure on community health, public health programmes, health administration and health aids and appliances, which together are estimated as \$97.3m (14% of health sector costs) in 2010 for arthritis.

- **The indirect costs of arthritis (\$2.50bn) outweigh health costs around 3.6 to 1.**

If you would like to read more of the findings, please either download the report from arthritis.org.nz or call 04 472 5640.





Sandra Kirby,
Arthritis New Zealand Chief Executive

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CONTRIBUTE TO THE JUICE

Closing date for the next issue
is 30 July 2010

We look forward to your
contribution

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editorial in The Juice do not imply endorsement by
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FROM THE Chief Executive's Desk

Kia ora tatou

It's a grim contest – what is the “most deserving” disease. Cancer was the leading cause of death for many years, but with improved treatment is now number two. Heart disease is the condition that is the leading cause of death. Arthritis will never compete for this spot – and for that most of us are thankful.

However death is not the only outcome from disease. The disabling aspects of chronic conditions such as arthritis have a huge impact on people's lives. It is this aspect that we try to quantify with the Burden of Disease reports.

We have estimated that more than 530,000 people in New Zealand are living with arthritis. The number is slightly higher than the 2005 estimate due to population increases. The cost to New Zealand for arthritis is over \$3billion. To put this in perspective - that's the equivalent of all of the forestry export for last year being spent on people with arthritis. This is the message we still need to keep bringing to the attention of people because we are under the national awareness radar. There are few families in New Zealand who don't experience the burden of arthritis. Most of the costs are hidden – people not working or cutting back hours, family members helping the person with arthritis to do chores that are impossible with swollen joints.

Many of the people with arthritis that I speak with discount their heroic efforts in overcoming the challenges of arthritis. These people seem to identify with Oscar Wilde when he said: “There is something terribly morbid in the modern sympathy with pain. One should sympathise with the colour, the beauty, the joy of life. The less said

about life's sores the better.”

Generally speaking I'm in that camp too – “the less said about life's sores the better” but sometimes we do have to speak out. Hiding pain behind a smile; hiding the cost of the disease behind the stoical response means others can't see. Unfortunately what can't be seen is sometimes ignored, and that is our challenge.

Our politicians have an unenviable task – dividing limited public money across unlimited public demand. We'll never get enough – but we do need people to know that there is a fair share – and only by being visible can we get that.

We can't fight over whether arthritis is more deserving of sympathy than cancer. It's not really a competition. We do want people to know that the burden and the cost's of arthritis are real. They are costs we bear as individuals, as family members, as taxpayers.

Nga mihi

Sandra Kirby
Chief Executive

NOTE FROM

The President

Since 2007 when Arthritis New Zealand produced the Burden of Disease for Arthritis report the information has been used widely – by us and by others. It is good to see the information updated. We knew that some costs such as the cost of new medicines had changed so having up to date figures is important for our advocacy work.

For people with arthritis the report probably doesn't feel like new information – if you have the disease you know the costs in terms of hospital time, medicines, loss of employment and the impact on your family. However what is obvious and well known to those who live with the disease is not known by others, particularly the politicians.

It is particularly fitting then that we are launching the new report at Parliament on 2nd June with a group of MPs some of whom have arthritis.

We will continue to use the information in

the new report to support our push to make arthritis a recognised health priority.

Research is one of the five programmes that the Governing Body agreed as strategic priorities. As well as having our research reports like this one we are proud to be able to offer grants to New Zealand researchers. Over the past three years we have provided over half a million dollars towards research in New Zealand, around 10% of the non government research funding. For the size of our organisation this is a significant contribution. One in which as a membership organisation we can all take pride.



It is the time of year when we ask you to renew your membership. The Governing Body have listened to the calls from members to reduce the cost of membership and we did. The cost of membership should not be a barrier for people to join the organisation and at \$20 we hope you are able to encourage others to join us in improving the quality of life for people with arthritis.

**Kathie Smith
President**

Working together

Wednesday 2nd June at the Beehive in Wellington saw the launch of Parliamentarians for Arthritis in association with Arthritis New Zealand

This idea behind this group is to establish a group of Parliamentarians familiar with and responsive to issues of significance to Arthritis New Zealand.

We have asked the group to commit to:

- One meeting a year at parliament where we provide an overview of our significant issues.
- Maintaining ongoing communication with us regarding pertinent legislation in relation to health and disability issues;

the not for profit and voluntary sector and their own party's policy.

- Asking parliamentary questions where appropriate.
- Identifying potential parliamentary initiatives they are willing to spearhead.
- Utilise the Parliamentary intranet to promote any activities or meetings we convene.

Sandra Kirby, Chief Executive of Arthritis New Zealand said: "We are delighted to have the opportunity to put the issues surrounding arthritis to a group of people who are in a position to make a difference."

"We know arthritis is an important issue to all New Zealanders, it is good to know Parliamentarians are taking it seriously as well."

My Arthritis Donation

When Rhiannon parent's noticed she had a pain in her knee and had difficulty sitting on the mat at school, they took her to see an Orthopaedic Specialist

The specialist who ran tests couldn't see any evidence of arthritis. Rhiannon's symptoms seemed to improve naturally but she still complained of pain in the back of her knees. She swam a lot during that summer and it seemed to help ease her pain.

That year in the third term of school, Rhiannon suffered such severe pain in her legs she could barely walk and her parents had to carry her. They returned to the specialist who referred them to a Paediatric Rheumatology Specialist who diagnosed Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA) and Rhiannon then underwent a series of treatments that have resulted in vast improvements in her mobility.

Rhiannon wanted to give something back to the kind people who treated her and also help other children who suffer from JIA. So she and her brother sold their beautiful drawings to raise funds. Following is Rhiannon's letter that accompanied her donation to Arthritis New Zealand, (warning be prepared for the 'ohhhh how cute' factor) you can't help but be impressed with this young arthritis sufferers' courage and heart. From the entire team at Arthritis New Zealand thank you so much for your lovely donation Rhiannon!

Do you need help managing your child's arthritis? Arthritis New Zealand offers:

- Individual education sessions to children affected by JIA and their family
- Informative workshops on specific/topics associated with JIA
- Information to school teachers at all levels.

My donation by Rhiannon

I will tell you how I donated my money I decided to give some money to the hospital so I said to Ryan my brother "let's paint dotty pictures and draw crayon pictures so we did that".

Dad bought one of my pictures he also bought one of Ryans pictures and he bought one that we both did.

When it was time to go to the hospital we went in the car. It takes along time to get to the Hospital when we got there to ladys gave me some money for the donation and I got some money from Ryan too.

I will tell you how much money there was \$22 and 40c. I gave the money to Sue Rudge and she gave it to Arthritis New Zealand. I gave the money to the Arthritis Foundation because I wanted them to have more money to help children like me with Arthritis.



\$1 Million Dollar Surprise Lottery

Although the official results for our \$1 Million Dollar Surprise Lottery weren't available as this issue of the 'The Juice' went to print, we can show some of the team out selling!



Your Questions

Do you have a question about arthritis you would like us to answer?

Dear Arthritis New Zealand

I am in a dilemma over choosing the right mattress for my arthritic hips and spine, can anyone throw some light on this subject please?

Although there is not a particular brand we would recommend at present, following is some useful general recommendations when choosing a mattress:

- A good mattress should be ergonomically correct. This means the natural curves of your spine should be maintained in any position.
- You should not feel the movements of your partner.
- The pressure on the supported areas of your body should be minimal.
- Your mattress, together with your quilt should create a balanced microclimate to moderate temperature.

Adjustable beds are better for people with arthritis:

- Precise and personalised positioning is important because the main reason for pain in the joints and muscles is lack of proper support from your bed.
- When you are resting on a flat bed, the pressure points at the neck, shoulders, hips and ankles can make you toss and turn, resulting in poor and interrupted sleep.
- Choosing an adjustable bed takes away these pressure points ensuring you relax more and therefore have a deeper, more restful and healthier night's sleep.
- The best way is to check different designs and prices for adjustable beds and choose what suits you the best.

If you have a query please write to us: PO Box 10 020, The Terrace, Wellington, 6143

Or call: 0800 663 463

Or join us on Facebook and Twitter through our website www.arthritis.org.nz

Feeling the cold?

For some New Zealanders having cold hands and feet is more than just a minor inconvenience, it's all part of living with scleroderma.

The word scleroderma comes from two Greek words: 'sclero' meaning hard, and 'derma' meaning skin. Hardening of the skin is one of the most visible manifestations of the disease.

Key facts on scleroderma:

- Scleroderma is a rare condition affecting between 1:1000- 1:10,000 people.
- It affects the connective tissues –skin, joints, blood vessels and internal organs.
- Women are 3-4 times more commonly affected than men.
- Disease onset is usually between the ages of 25 and 50.
- The complications of scleroderma have marked negative effects on the sufferer's quality of life.
- There is no drug that will cure scleroderma. But a combination of medications and self-help treatments can help to control the symptoms and treat any complications.
- Support and education are essential to helping sufferers.

How serious is scleroderma?

The symptoms of scleroderma vary greatly from individual to individual, and the effects of scleroderma can range from very mild to life-threatening. The seriousness will depend on what parts of the body are affected and the extent to which they are affected. A mild case can become more serious if not properly treated. Prompt and proper diagnosis and treatment by qualified physicians may minimise the symptoms of scleroderma and lessen the chance for irreversible damage.

What causes scleroderma?

The exact cause or causes of scleroderma are still unknown, but it is known that scleroderma involves overproduction of collagen. Most patients do not have any relatives with scleroderma and their children do not get scleroderma. Research indicates that there is a susceptibility gene which raises the likelihood of getting scleroderma, but by itself does not cause the disease.

What is the treatment for scleroderma?

At the present time, there is no cure for scleroderma, but there are many treatments available. Some are directed at particular symptoms like heartburn, which can be controlled by medications called proton pump inhibitors or medicine to improve the motion of the bowel. Some treatments are directed at decreasing the activity of the immune system.

Some people with mild disease may not need medication at all and occasionally people can come off treatment when their scleroderma is no longer active. Because there is so much variation from one person to another there is great range in the treatments prescribed. The good news is that in the last 20 years, prognosis is much more positive due to advances in research into scleroderma.

Ref: Information sourced from Scleroderma Foundation website: www.scleroderma.org



Living with scleroderma

Lined gloves is not generally what you see people carrying around in April with the high expected to be 19 degrees, but for Dianne Purdie it's a must have



In 2006 at the age of 43, Dianne was diagnosed with scleroderma with lung fibrosis after she noticed that any change in temperature, being as slight as moving around in the house or in the supermarket made her hands and feet turn blue. She also noticed more puffing than normal when going up hills or on long walks.

Scleroderma has been linked to using solvents at work, and Dianne strongly believes her illness was the result of 25 years of hand staining slides in labs as a medical cytologist. She quit her job and applied for compensation but ACC said there was not enough evidence to support her claim. After leaving her job

Dianne's symptoms have improved.

It was through the media coverage of her claim that she started to receive messages from other scleroderma sufferers in New Zealand and alongside her husband and Arthritis New Zealand she re-established a Wellington support group for people with scleroderma. Dianne is also working with others to reestablish a national website to link support groups around the country.

Dianne has learnt to accept her condition and remain positive: "It was a bit of a shock at first and took a while to adjust" said Dianne.

"But you can't just think about the negative side of things, you need go on leading a normal life. Having a serious disease like this, it is important to have a goal to work towards."

Dianne is currently training to be a sonographer and hopes to enrol on one of Arthritis New Zealand's 'Living A Healthy Life' courses where the aim of the course is to provide participants with the knowledge, skills and support, necessary to increase personal confidence in their own abilities to deal with the effects on their conditions, and thereby maintain full lives.

While Dianne doesn't take any medication, she does make sure she leads a healthy lifestyle by remaining active through walking and

gardening and maintains a well-balanced diet. Dianne tries to avoid contact with solvents and doesn't drink alcohol or smoke and has cut down to one cup of tea a day to limit her caffeine intake. Dianne has also found that taking Evening Primrose Oil has softened her skin.

Dianne encourages other sufferers to stay positive: "Don't let it take over your life. Keep as physically active as possible, something that moves the joints, don't just sit around."

The support group that Dianne has formed with her husband meets every 3 months and a guest speaker is often asked along. The up and



coming meeting has Richard Steele, an immunologist from Wellington Hospital addressing the group on an overview of scleroderma with a focus on laboratory tests.

More information on the group, including dates of meetings can be found at arthritis.org.nz or please contact Dianne or Gordon Purdie on (04) 479 5548, or at diannepurdie@xtra.co.nz

To subscribe to Dianne's support group newsletter please contact Barbara Spavin at barbara@netco.co.nz

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Start your scooters!

While there weren't any burnouts, that doesn't mean that the Far North mobility scooter races in Kaitiāia weren't challenging or exciting.

Eight teams of four turned out, with each team having to negotiate the course on mobility scooters and complete various other tasks, from answering arthritis related questions to blowing up balloons while wearing welder's gloves, meeting the sort of challenge that faces arthritis sufferers on a daily basis.

The rules were kept simple, many of them focusing on the fact that the judge Carol Hall, an Arthritis New Zealand Service Centre Co-ordinator would openly accept bribes!

This innovative fundraising event raised an impressive \$800 to be used towards making life a little easier for arthritis sufferers in the Far North.



Picture supplied by: The Northland Age, Kaitiāia.

Stash reHash

If anyone was in doubt about the resurgence of crafts then the Stash reHash fabric market was proof of how strong it is amongst women and men of all ages. By Vivienne Newnham



By opening time the queue of amiable, but determined, stash-hunters was stretching around the building and down the street.

For the next 3½ hours we were hemmed in by the crowd. Many were carefully considerate of their home stash and so were very selective; turning down wonderful woollens, cute cottons and durable drills. Others had projects in mind and had us hunting out navy parka nylon or crimson corduroy.

At times the crowd was 4 – 5 people deep so Ange took to the stage, unfolding some stunning prints and then missile-ing them over heads to the first hand raised. "Garish" or "gorgeous", we daren't say as some items were desperately vied for.

As our customers lugged their loot home we surveyed the shambles. Volunteers once thought lost appeared disentangling themselves from the fabric. Although we were weary we knew the time spent planning, sorting and preparing for the market had been well used.

The call for unwanted treasures went out two months ago by way of community newspaper articles about the event. Donors were thrilled and thankful to regain the use of rooms or cupboards cleared by the process of destashing. Invariably they were grateful to give to our cause as many had had to relinquish their crafting due to sore and swollen hands. While listening to their stories we were able to talk about our services and channelled many crafters into clinics.

We were delighted to find the amount raised exceeded \$5,000.

50's Up Brass Band's 2010

Dame Malvina Major is the Guest Star for the 50's Up Brass Band's 2010 Spectacular Brass and Variety Concert

The annual 50's Up Brass Band's Spectacular and Variety Concert, which raises funds for the Canterbury Service Centre of Arthritis New Zealand, will be held in the Christchurch Town Hall Auditorium on Wednesday September 29th at 2pm.

To date, the 50's Up Brass Band Variety Concerts have raised \$30,000 to assist with the Arthritis New Zealand's services in Canterbury.

This year the band is honoured to have

Dame Malvina Major, New Zealand's premier diva, as its guest star. Dame Malvina is

New Zealand's leading opera star. She is in constant demand within New Zealand and has performed in Asia, the Middle East, the United States, Australia and Great Britain in recent times.

Book before July 31st to qualify for the EARLY BOOKING COMPETITION, (\$600 in prizes) and to choose the best seats in the house. Phone (03) 377 8899, www.ticketek.co.nz. or any other Ticketek outlet.

On your bike!

The Central South Island Bike Ride is not for the faint-hearted with riders covering 365km from Timaru to Kurow, through to Lake Tekapo and back to Timaru.

Cyclists from all over New Zealand (including Arthritis New Zealand's Canterbury Educator Suzanne Croft) and as far afield as Australia participated in the ride and along the way enjoyed three days of fun and friendship as well as some of New Zealand's most spectacular scenery.

Eight South Canterbury charities received donations from this year's ride which saw more than 170 riders raise a whopping \$136,000.

Arthritis New Zealand received \$20,400 which will be used locally in the Canterbury region to continue supporting those who

suffer from arthritis.

"We were delighted that the event organisers (all volunteers) chose Arthritis New Zealand as a recipient charity again this year."

"It has been a pleasure and a privilege to be involved in this superbly organised bike ride which has over the past five years raised in excess of half a million dollars for organisations' working in the South Canterbury community," said Jan Harrison, Southern Regional Manager for Arthritis New Zealand.

NEW MEMBERSHIP RATES FROM 1 JULY 2010

\$20 for individuals and \$30 for households

Join Us

Arthritis New Zealand Membership Form

I would like to: (please tick)

- Become a member
- Renew my membership

2010/11 Subscriptions: (please tick)

- Individual \$20.00
- Household \$30.00

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

Address:

Phone:

Ethnicity:

Date of birth:

If buying a household membership, how many are in your household?

Do you have arthritis?

If yes, what type do you have?

Please check the expiry date on your membership card before posting this form to:

**Membership
Arthritis New Zealand
PO Box 10-020
Wellington, 6143**

or take it into one of our Service Centres - details on the back page.

Arthritis Supporters

We all know in this day and age having friends in high places can really help getting your message heard

Arthritis New Zealand is proud to have some of these friends! And with a bit of luck this will grow as even glamorous celebrities can not escape arthritis.

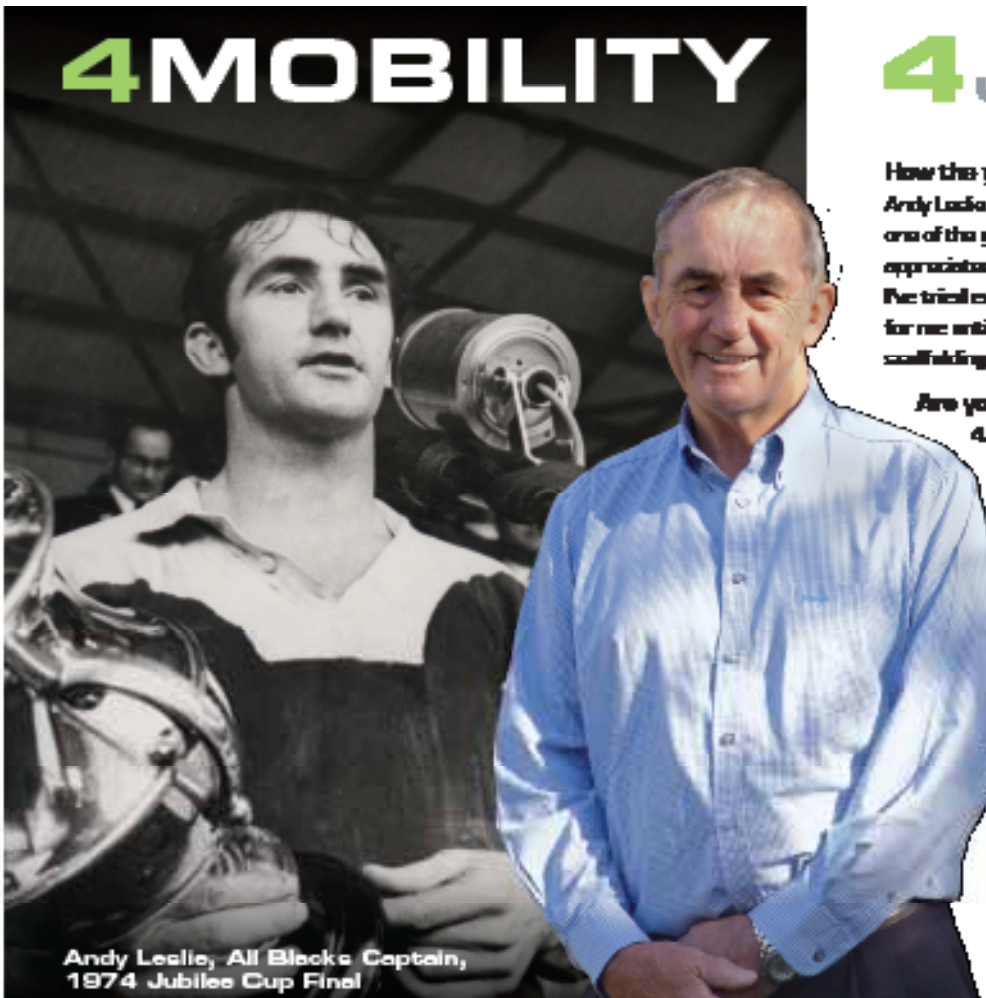
For those of you who love dancing you would have seen last year Geraldine Brophy danced her socks off in support of Arthritis New Zealand and happily joined our growing list of celebrity ambassadors.

Other ambassadors for Arthritis New Zealand include cricket umpire Billy Bowden, who until he became an ambassador for us five years ago didn't speak publicly about his arthritis, Mark Treffers has just signed up along side Lyn Dalzell (nee Rowe) and Jaynie Hudgell (nee Parkhouse) after their magnificent recent fundraising effort at the pool, as well as Wellington's Easy Listening Breeze presenter Steve Joll.

Arthritis New Zealand thanks these wonderful celebrities for supporting us and helping spread awareness of a New Zealand's leading cause of disease that can affect anyone of any age.



4MOBILITY



Andy Leslie, All Blacks Captain, 1974 Jubilee Cup Final

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TOP: AP/WIDE WORLD

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Time to get shopping!

The Arthritis New Zealand online shop is up and running so make sure you check it out by visiting arthritis.org.nz and clicking on the 'merchandise' section.

Products range from health supplements, to Ease Of Use items, books, Arthritis New Zealand merchandise and self help products.

You can also buy your Arthritis New Zealand membership online! So from the comfort of your own home you can buy products to help you manage your arthritis or help someone else with arthritis, and support Arthritis New Zealand at the same time, don't you just love technology?

Did you know that Arthritis New Zealand is also on Facebook and Twitter? Become our friend and follow our tweets!

Just click on the Facebook and Twitter icons on the home page of our website at www.arthritis.org.nz



We need your help

You can help us deliver services and support to the thousands of New Zealanders who suffer from arthritis by donating now. Please cut out the donation slip below, fill in and post back to Arthritis New Zealand, every donation counts!

Yes, I want to support New Zealanders affected by arthritis!

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Mailing address: _____

Please fill in this donation slip and post back to us:
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Thank you! Your donation makes a difference!

Enclosed is my donation of:

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I am paying by: Visa Mastercard Amex Diners
 Cheque enclosed (please make out to 'Arthritis New Zealand')

Card No. _____

Expiry date / Card holder _____

Signature _____

Did you know that you can also donate online? www.arthritis.org.nz

Getting Active Aids Fibromyalgia

A new study suggests that small increases in everyday activities like gardening, housework or even taking the stairs instead of the elevator can improve pain and increase function in people with fibromyalgia.

Researchers at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore split 84 people with fibromyalgia who were inactive to two groups: one that was asked to attend fibromyalgia education classes, and another that was assigned to engage in 30 minutes of what they called 'lifestyle physical activities' on five to seven days of the week for 12 weeks.

They defined lifestyle physical activities as everyday activities like vacuuming, walking or scrubbing the shower.

Participants were told the proper intensity level for these activities would cause them to breathe a little heavier but would still allow them to carry on a conversation and that the 30 minutes could be spread throughout the day, rather than accomplished all at once.

Researchers relied on a questionnaire that allowed participants to report their results. At the end of 12 weeks, participants said they did not experience differences in terms of fatigue or depression. But those doing lifestyle activities did perceive that they had less pain and were functioning better than those who were only getting education and support.

Fibromyalgia is a chronic form of arthritis where muscles are affected by widespread pain. The word Fibromyalgia meaning 'Fibro' – fibrous tissue e.g: tendons and ligaments, 'my' meaning pain and 'algia' meaning tenderness. Fibromyalgia can affect one's personal and professional life due to the associated symptoms such as fatigue and lack of energy. It can be difficult for the person with the condition in society as often there is nothing to 'see' to make the pain obvious.

But many with fibromyalgia find it difficult or impossible to exercise due to the level of pain experienced and their physical abilities can be very limited.

"To me, the big news is that getting people with fibromyalgia just to do a little more physical activity can reap benefits," says Kevin Fontaine, PhD, the lead author and an associate professor of Medicine at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. "Anything is better than nothing, and our hope is as people do short bursts of activity perhaps they start to feel better and can start to transition to exercise."

"The nature of the disease with the pain and fatigue makes it difficult to stick to a traditional program. So start with this and some may be able to transition to traditional exercise, but to those who can't, this does seem to be an alternative that is beneficial," Fontaine says.

REF: This study was published in the journal Arthritis Research & Therapy and sourced from Arthritis Today Magazine website.

What is Fibromyalgia?

Fibromyalgia is a condition associated with the generalised muscle pain and fatigue. It is described as a form of 'soft tissue rheumatism,' which means it is a condition that causes pain and stiffness around the joints and in muscles and bones. It does not cause inflammation.

What causes Fibromyalgia?

No one knows what causes fibromyalgia. Researchers speculate that it may be many different factors, alone or in combination. For example, factors such as infectious illness, physical trauma, emotional trauma or hormonal changes, may contribute to generalised pain, fatigue and sleep disturbances that characterise the condition.

Since July 2009 through Arthritis New Zealand's clinics and seminars, we have helped 207 clients with fibromyalgia, predominantly women.

Our Arthritis Educator, Janice Klinkhamer, who suffers from fibromyalgia offers some helpful advice to sufferers: "Pacing activities is all important, there is a need to alternate work with 'rest' periods, placing the body in a different position. Thus more work is achieved and self esteem rises."

If you or someone you know suffers from Fibromyalgia, please call us on 0800 663 463 or drop into one of our local service centres featured on the last page of this magazine.



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- Gives deep warming effect
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- Developed in NZ and used successfully by thousands of health and sports professionals



Just Keep Swimming ...

In a much anticipated legends relay for charity, which saw some of New Zealand's swimming greats' line up against each other, an outstanding swim by Mark Treffers ensured his team – The Arthritis New Zealand team - hit the wall in first place.

Swimming for Arthritis New Zealand was Mark Treffers, Lyn Dalzell (nee Rowe), Cameron Gibson, Jaynie Hudgell (nee Parkhouse), Richard Lockhart and Ross Anderson who outclassed some high quality competition to take the honours at the West Wave Aquatic Centre on Saturday 10 April.

Treffers' team raised over \$11,000 for Arthritis New Zealand, the most raised by the eight teams participating. Due to their fundraising efforts, they started the race in lane four gaining the early advantage.

The team romped home in 3:00.49 over 10 metres ahead of the next team. The team's success was due to Mark's cunning strategy of calculating each team member's strength of each leg of the race. A special mention must be made of the gutsy swim that Lyn Dalzell put in after only recently finished a round of chemotherapy.

The relay was a medley comprising 50m backstroke, 50m breaststroke, 50m butterfly and three 50m freestyle and was started by 1952 Olympic bronze medallist Jean Hurring.

It would have been virtually impossible to miss (or not hear) the Arthritis New Zealand cheer squad headed up by our very own CE Sandra Kirby: "We made our presence felt, it was just so exciting," said Sandra.

Not only did the cheerleading squad look fantastic in their branded polo shirts but they also had orange and purple poms poms (put

together by our lovely volunteers at the National Office) and clappers to cheer the Arthritis New Zealand team home to victory.

Mark who's wife has Rheumatoid Arthritis so he understands clearly the impact that arthritis has on a family said that he will 'train harder' for the next battle of the swimming legends.

Arthritis New Zealand would like to thank all the swimmers for their fantastic efforts, especially team captain Mark, and also to all of those who made a donation. The funds will be used to continue helping and supporting the thousands of New Zealanders who struggle with arthritis daily.



The winning team - Team Treffers



Fantastic effort by Jaynie Hudgell (nee Parkhouse)



Images courtesy of Photography by Woolf

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