

JOINT SUPPORT

ARTHRITIS NEW ZEALAND NEWSLETTER JUNE 2014



Acknowledging the different faces of arthritis

Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers!



Our volunteers help us in so many different ways, such as collecting during our annual appeal, helping with land and water-based exercise classes, driving, volunteering at children's camps, assisting at seminars, administration tasks in our offices, and so much more. Without them, Arthritis New Zealand would be unable to provide comprehensive support to the 530,000 New Zealanders living with arthritis. As part of Volunteer Awareness Week (15-21 June), we would like to celebrate and thank every one of them.

Katya Skobeleva has been a volunteer at Arthritis New Zealand's National Office since September 2013. She mainly assists with clerical and database work, and her contributions are highly valued.

Katya enjoys her work, and grateful for the opportunity to help people who are living with arthritis.



Maurice washes a car window at the Z-Halifax service station in Nelson, as part of the Z-Energy 'Good in the Hood' fundraiser for Arthritis New Zealand. Photo: Nelson Weekly

If there was ever any further proof needed that exercise is good for arthritis, you wouldn't need to look any further than Maurice Abrahams. Maurice may be 95, but he leads an active life. And this is despite having polymyalgia rheumatica (PMR).

Maurice believes he has also now developed osteoarthritis (OA), which is the most common form of arthritis in New Zealand, and it is estimated that 305,000 people in the country live with the condition.

And while many older people, like Maurice, are living with arthritis, it is important to note that arthritis is not

an older person's condition. Arthritis can affect anybody, at any age. Of the 530,000 people in New Zealand who are living with arthritis, 1,000 of them are children. Page 8 inside tells the story of Phoebe, who is 13, and has arthritis.

Volunteering is an important part of Maurice's life. In this photo, Maurice is volunteering at the Z-Halifax service station in Nelson, as part of the Z-Energy 'Good in the Hood' scheme'.

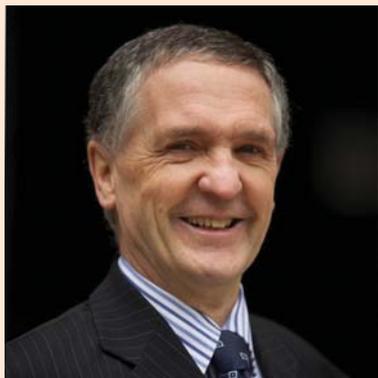


**ARTHRITIS
NEW ZEALAND**

KAIPONAPONA AOTEAROA

*Improving the lives of
people affected by arthritis*

*Te whai kia pai ake te hunga
kua pāngia e te kaiponapona*



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From the President

With this issue of Joint Support is the membership renewal information. This year our membership cards have a different look reflecting the renewed brand.

Arthritis New Zealand chose orange as our colour several years ago. Orange was chosen to represent positivity, warmth and inclusion. The gerbera is very much part of the Arthritis New Zealand image. These daisies are of South African origin and the bright orange ones are said to represent warmth and happiness. Together they do make a fitting representation for a membership organisation.

Our history is a proud one – for over 40 years we have provided advice support and information on arthritis. The way that information and support is provided has changed over the years but we are unwavering in our commitment to meet the current needs of people with arthritis.

There is an old saying about strength in numbers – that certainly is true when we think about members. Membership remains the backbone of Arthritis New Zealand. As members you do have a say in how Arthritis New Zealand operates. I, and the other members of the Governing Body, represent the membership when we meet.

The Governing Body is already starting to plan for the 50th anniversary celebrations for Arthritis New Zealand. 2016 will mark 50 years since Dr Tim Williams called a meeting of people to discuss forming a group to represent the interests of people with arthritis. While much has changed over the intervening years we carry that passion and commitment and work on improving the quality of life for people with arthritis.

I appreciate that there has to be a benefit from membership. However for me there is more to membership than member benefits. I prefer to re-phrase the question as “What will I achieve through being a member of Arthritis New Zealand?” It is our members that create the voice of arthritis. That was an early vision for our founders – and remains a significant role for Arthritis New Zealand now. For me the real benefit of membership is being able to speak for people with arthritis.

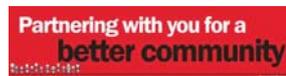
Thank you for renewing your membership. In this practical way you are showing people that you are committed to helping reduce the burden of arthritis – for the individual and for the whole community.

Alan Henwood
President

Arthritis New Zealand is grateful to be supported by:



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From the Chief Executive

Kia ora tatou

As you opened this issue of Joint Support you may have noticed that it looked a little bit different. We have introduced a new look for Arthritis New Zealand – an updated brand.

The impetus for the brand refresh came with the adoption of the new Strategic Plan last year. In changing our mission statement to Improving the lives of people affected by arthritis, the Governing Body asked the question “Where will we see this statement?” Our older mission statement was incorporated into the letterhead and the corporate brand. After 13 years it was time to relook at the brand.

I met up with a friend over Easter who was excitedly telling me she is getting a professional makeover. She is looking forward to seeing herself in a new way – and embracing the new look suitable for her current place in the world. I think sentiment is equally true for a corporate brand – there is a time for a new look so you can face the world with renewed confidence in your own style. We are excited about our new brand – and the new look.

There were parts of the brand we really wanted to keep. Orange is our colour. When we adopted it in 2001 it was to represent strength, determination and encouragement. By using the colour orange, Arthritis New Zealand aims to create feelings of brightness and positivity as well as warmth and inclusion. It is a highly visible, distinctive colour. These are the qualities we aim to live by – so keeping orange and purple as “our” colours was a given. We certainly weren’t changing for changes sake.

It is now eight years since we started using the gerbera. This flower has grown to be part of how people

recognise Arthritis New Zealand and needs to be incorporated into our brand. The gerbera is part of the daisy family – very common; often overlooked but worthy of attention in its own right. A fitting symbol for arthritis.

Being very much a national organisation and showing our commitment to the peoples of the land it is fitting to have our mission statement in both English and Maori.

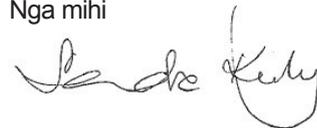
In 13 years fashions have changed – in branding as well as in clothing. Arthritis New Zealand was a trend setter – not only in adopting orange as a brand colour but also in using orange as the background for all our material. The new trend is to look crisper – so you will see more white and less of the orange background. This has the added advantage of lowering the printing costs.

And so our new look has arrived. Our image remains bright and positive. The gerbera is very much part of who we are now. And while new it retains much of the history of the organisation.

Just as my friend won’t be throwing out her old wardrobe because some new clothes will come in, Arthritis New Zealand will only be using the new brand when we need to reprint or renew existing resources. For a while there will be a mixture of the old and the new. But over time the old brand will be phased out and we will only see the new look.

And yes my own personal wardrobe continues to include a great deal of orange – I am branded for Arthritis New Zealand wherever I go.

Nga mihi



Sandra Kirby
Chief Executive



Hei maumaharatanga (In memory)



We were saddened by the news that one of our former Presidents and Honorary Life Members Ron Wilton had passed away. His funeral was held on 28 March.

Ron was our President from 1983-1986.

Ron, and his late wife, Gwen are survived by their son David. We extend our thanks for Ron’s tremendous contributions to Arthritis New Zealand, and offer out sincerest condolences.

To advertise in *Joint Support*, email editor@arthritis.org.nz or phone 0800 663 463.

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Arthritis New Zealand is grateful to be supported by:



Yoga and arthritis



Yoga is becoming a popular form of exercise and health therapy among people with arthritis. The most common form of yoga in the West is Hatha Yoga, a combination of physical, breathing, and relaxation practices. While practised mainly for physical health benefits, people are also turning to yoga to improve their sleep, relieve stress, and manage pain.

As part of my PhD at the University of Otago, I conducted a small study to investigate the feasibility and safety of a relaxation-focused yoga programme for people with rheumatoid arthritis (RA). Twenty-six participants with RA-related pain and sleep disturbance were recruited through the Rheumatology Department of Dunedin Hospital. They were randomly allocated to either the yoga intervention group or the control group; then completed questionnaires on their RA-related health (e.g. pain, sleep, disease activity) one week before, one week after, and four weeks after the yoga intervention.

Participants allocated to the control group continued with their usual care throughout the study period, with the option of attending a two day yoga workshop at the completion of the study. Participants in the yoga group continued with their usual care, and additionally received an eight week relaxation-based yoga programme, consisting of weekly home and group practice. Home practice consisted of listening to a 20 minute guided relaxation CD, three times per week, and group practice consisted of a weekly 75-minute yoga class.



Group classes consisted of a weekly theme and yoga philosophy, breathing practices, warm-up movements, and gentle yoga postures. Each class ended with 15 minutes of guided relaxation. Participants were provided with a set of yoga props and a 1.2m wide height-adjustable table. Participants used these tables for the lying yoga postures, relaxation, and breathing practices, rather than having to get up and down from the floor to do them.

Overall, the yoga participants were very positive about the yoga programme. Participants attended an average of seven out of eight group classes, and completed an average of 14 home practices over the eight week intervention. At the end of the study, several yoga participants self-reported improved energy (31%), more physical activity (23%), and increased range of motion (23%). No serious side effects were associated with the yoga intervention.

Overall, the eight week relaxation-focused yoga programme was feasible, safe, and met with high levels of satisfaction from all study participants. Yoga practices were achievable by participants with RA

experiencing mild pain, mild to moderate functional disability, and moderate disease activity.

However, several participants depended on the use of the electronic tables for the physical yoga postures, and some postures may need modification in future trials if this equipment is not available. Results support proceeding to a large-scale study, to investigate the effectiveness of yoga for improving aspects of physical and mental health in people with arthritis. The involvement of people with arthritis in the design of a future trial is encouraged, to develop ways to adapt the yoga intervention to people with limited mobility, and to improve participants' adherence to home practice.

Lesley Ward

If you would like any further information about the study, please contact Lesley at lesley.ward@otago.ac.nz

Lesley received a grant from Arthritis New Zealand to support this research project.

Te Waka sets sail!



The 'Northern Waka', as it is affectionately known at Arthritis New Zealand, has now set sail. As was described in the previous edition of Joint Support, a series of events focussed on the Far North and Mid North were held in May.

As well as a promotion of Arthritis New Zealand's website and 0800 number, workshops and seminars, and clinics

have been already held in Cooper's Beach, Kaitaia, Awanui, Ahipara, and Te Kao. More events will be held in the immediate future in Kaikohe and Kerikeri. Several hundred people have attended so far, and showed a real appreciation for our availability in communities that are remote and often overlooked. The also appreciated the importance of dispelling myths and providing accurate information, and

the benefits of linking with a range of community and health providers.

Already we have received requests for visits to other parts of Northland and we have given a commitment to continue to build services in the Far North.

Arthritis New Zealand is grateful for a generous bequest from the Ham Estate, which has made these initiatives possible.

JIANTS (Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis Theatre Show)

This was a dream established when our Youth Leaders met in Wellington in 2013. We are grateful to Geraldine Brophy for her initial vision, and her ongoing work to turn it into reality.

JIANTS will be a theatre show for young people with arthritis. We currently have external funding for one show, which will be held in Wellington in December. Rehearsals will be in Wellington at times/dates to be agreed to reflect the 'casts' school commitments, although it is hoped that it may be possible to hold some of the one to one rehearsals may be possible via Skype.

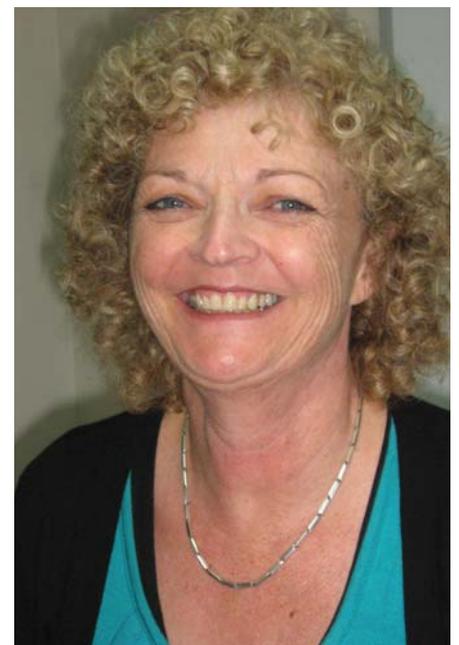
The costs of attending rehearsals and performing in the show will be met by Arthritis New Zealand, supported by a grant from the Ministry of Social Development.

Senior Advisor – Clinical Services & Research

Arthritis New Zealand is delighted to announce the appointment of Cathie Morton to the new role of Senior Advisor – Clinical Services & Research. This role incorporates the duties and responsibilities formerly held by Natalia Valentino.

Cathie commences in this role on Monday 9 June. Her immediate past role was Chief Executive of Union and Community Health in Christchurch. Cathie trained as a nurse, and she has spent the last decade working in health management and service evaluation.

Cathie has relocated from Christchurch to Wellington to take up this role.



Footwear and inflammatory arthritis

Georgina Barr, a student at Auckland University of Technology, was one of the recipients of an Arthritis New Zealand's Summer Scholarship. This story is based on a report she submitted outlining her research into the provision of footwear for people with inflammatory arthritis in New Zealand

Arthritic conditions affect more than 500,000 New Zealanders. The impact of arthritis on the foot is often overlooked, as is the influence of footwear to disease management and quality of life. Previous studies involving people with inflammatory arthritic conditions have been undertaken in a localised fashion, and were particular to a particular city or institution. A more comprehensive national focus was required to identify important factors that may influence personal preferences with regards to footwear choice.

Podiatric care is frequently recommended but infrequently included in the multidisciplinary team managing people with inflammatory arthritic conditions.

The aim of the summer research project was to explore and gain understanding around issues of footwear faced in adults with inflammatory arthritic conditions in New Zealand.

An online survey was held from early December 2013 to mid February 2014.

Survey respondents were predominantly European females, aged 46-65 years old. Very few Māori and Pacific people participated, and the majority of participants were from main centres, such as Auckland and Wellington.

- Forty percent of respondents were retired, and the majority of respondents had osteoarthritis and/or rheumatoid arthritis. About two-thirds of respondents have been diagnosed as having arthritis for over five years.



- Sixty-seven percent of respondents have been prescribed with some form of insole or other kind of orthotics
- Seventeen percent have footwear issued from the Orthotic Centre
- Nearly one-third do not wear footwear which was issued from the Orthotic Centre

The most important factors when choosing footwear were comfort, support, and fit. Colour was the least important factor. Walking shoes and athletic shoes were the most popular for winter use, while sandals, walking shoes and athletic shoes were the most popular for summer.

Sixty-three percent of respondents reported some degree of some shoe trouble, and stated their feet could get very hot in the summer. And seventy-three percent said they would like a supportive, insole-friendly sandal for the summer months.

The survey also allowed respondents to share their experiences of their inflammatory arthritic conditions, and further analysis is being undertaken.

Based on a report by Georgina Barr, Auckland University of Technology

The faces of arthritis

To raise awareness of the more than 140 different forms of arthritis the Hon Michael Woodhouse hosted an evening for our Parliamentary Friends in the Grand Hall of Parliament on 14 May.

Entertainment was provided by Arthritis Ambassador, Suzanne Prentice and we don't think anyone has danced in the Grand Hall for many years.

The singing and dancing had to stop at 7.30 pm, as the House was in session.

Other Arthritis Ambassadors James Lowe, Dick Taylor, Mary-Jane O'Reilly, and Anna Mortlock, joined guests and shared their stories of how they were living and overcoming the challenges of arthritis.

Guests included MPs, Governing Body members, and many of our advocates and their families.

It was a fun evening, and Michael Woodhouse has already given us instructions for bigger and better events next year.

Everyone left, well fed and with a lot more knowledge of this chronic health condition.

Arthritis New Zealand is grateful to Pfizer New Zealand and Abbvie for their support of this function.



Suzanne Prentice entertains the guests at our most recent Parliamentary Friends of Arthritis function

Suzanne's story

As a kid I used to get pains in my shoulders which my brothers thought was funny and was always lightheartedly referred to as 'just screws'.

Over the last 10 years I'd noticed my hands becoming very swollen, stiff sore and misshapen. Occasionally my fingers will lock up and won't do a thing.

I've never been referred to a specialist so I don't know what type of arthritis I have. I'm going to get a referral as soon as possible.

I've tried over the years to hide my hands. Clasping them together or putting them under the table etc, but working in the public eye and television it's not always easy to do. I notice as the weather gets cold and damp the pain is worse which I guess is normal. I'm not taking any medication for it at present as I was always under the impression I was too young to take medication because of the side effects.

Until talking with people and specialist at the dinner last week I've always just thought ... You've got nothing to complain about when you look around just get on with it.

Phoebe's journey: Look out, World!

'Arthritis.' When you first hear that word you instantly think, 'that's for old people.' This is not entirely true. My name is Phoebe, I am 13 years old, and I have Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA).

I was diagnosed with JIA last year, and I am still working out medicines to help prevent this getting worse. JIA is not wear and tear; it is an autoimmune disease, which means your immune system attacks healthy tissue causing inflammation in your joints. There are many different types of JIA. And it doesn't just affect joints, but can also give you many other symptoms, such as chronic fatigue, nausea and problems with all parts of your body, inside and out.

I have a 'go-getter' attitude and I strive for new adventures and love trying new things. When I do have a flare up people don't understand how I can go from vibrant and enthusiastic to tired and miserable. My arthritis isn't visible, it's invisible. At the moment I am struggling with writing. This should be just a simple task but to me it's becoming a mammoth task.

For children with arthritis, it is hard to tell people because of some reactions. I tend to find people don't believe me, and when I am off sick again, the reaction can sometimes be that I seemed fine yesterday; maybe I just don't like school. I try to tell people I love school! School to me is my get away place to try and ignore everything that is happening behind the scenes that people don't know about. I am not a complainer. I try and make all things have a positive, when my friends do ask if I'm ok I usually reply with or say I'm fine.

My mum tells me I need to say how I am really feeling and what is going on for me other wise no one knows what's really going on for me. This is really good advice, I have educated my friends made them more understanding of what I am going through, which makes me feel a lot better if I'm going into a depressing way. The first time I realised this

was happening was last Christmas. My Aunty had been searching for the perfect present, and bought me this ring. I was so excited. It looked amazing. All eyes were on me, as it is tradition in our bigger family to sit in a circle and each open our presents while everyone watches. I was so excited! It was just what I wanted! I took it out and tried to put it on, but my fingers that day were inflamed, fat and swollen! There was no way I could fit it on. This made me upset. Then my mum tried to cheer me and made a light hearted joke, but it kind of backfired.

I was really upset. You probably think 'harden up', but all I could think about was how excited my Aunty was about this gift and how it totally sucked that I have arthritis! Although at times it is incredibly hard, I need to find ways to cope. I will always have my ups and downs, and challenges with arthritis, but who said it needs to hold you back? You won't see me letting it hold me back, me and my family will always find ways to get around it.

In February I was lucky enough to be invited to the Arthritis New Zealand Children's Camp at Totara Springs. The camp was organised for children to meet other children with arthritis, and to be educated about your condition. This was the most awesome experience I have ever been a part of. When we were driving to Totara Springs I was nervous, as I thought all the kids there would be in wheelchairs, and I would look like a bit of a fraud. This was so not the case. The next day, all of us were up climbing 10 metre rock climbing walls, doing archery, building rafts, kayaking and all sorts of other things! I met some really amazing people with so many amazing and inspirational stories, from there I have met so many people and have caught up and kept in touched with some outside of the camp. This is so cool. This camp happens once a year thanks to some amazing sponsors. If they didn't run these camps, then I and other kids living with this horrible



disease wouldn't have been able to be part of these experiences. Meeting people with the same struggles was awesome. Someone only recently asked me what are your top 5 experiences, I answered back with Totara Springs arthritis camp as one of them. If there is any other kids who might be diagnosed with any kind of arthritis I would recommend this as one experience you have to be a part of. The camp made me realise that my arthritis doesn't need to take over my life. Having arthritis is making me a better person and changing how I see things in life. That probably sounds corny but it's true. If I could have the chance to reverse all of this I would, in heart beat, but I can't. I'm not going to let it take over and stop me from doing experiences that teenagers get to face. I am and we are no different to any other, yes we have one thing that not everyone has to struggle with but that's not something to always be down on. I can tell you this when you meet a child with arthritis they are probably some of the most positive people you will ever meet. Next time when you hear the word 'arthritis' and someone says 'that's for old people' you reply with, I have only just found out, Kids can have arthritis too!

Look out, World!

Phoebe Nielsen
(abridged)

Arthritis Children's Camp

In March, 29 children and their caregivers attended this year's Arthritis New Zealand Children's Camp at the beautiful Totara Springs Camp near Matamata. The children attending had recently been diagnosed with arthritis.

The children got to meet others living with arthritis, ask questions, and challenge themselves on new activities. And the parents and caregivers had the opportunity to meet other adults caring for children with arthritis. The camp was a tremendous success, and we are grateful to Region 4 of The Warehouse, whose support made the camp possible.



Charity Golf Classic



Despite the weather threatening to be below par leading up to the event, it stayed dry for Arthritis New Zealand's Charity Golf Classic in Paraparaumu Beach. While nobody won the car that was up for grabs for the hole in one, there were some other fantastic prizes won, and a great time was had by all. Plus, the tournament raised funds to help us achieve our mission

Our grateful thanks go our sponsor, Pharmacybrands Limited (now Green Cross Health), who made all this possible.

Live Facebook with Arthritis Educators

Remember we have live Facebook sessions with Arthritis Educators running on Mondays from 7.00 – 9.00 pm. If you are a Facebook user and have questions on arthritis then please join us.

Experiences of health practitioners

We have been running regular on line surveys seeking information on issues of significance for people with arthritis.

The most recent survey, on how people are managing their arthritis, had 244 respondents. The main results are:

- Over 50% of respondents have osteoarthritis
- GPs were the health professional they saw most often
- 52% were satisfied with their arthritis management
- 48% were only partially or not satisfied
- The most important consideration when choosing a health professional was finding someone who understood how arthritis affected them - only 24% identified affordability as their main consideration.
- Pain management was the most important factor in management of their arthritis.

Respondents were from a wide age range from under 20 to over 80. Most (89%) were female and New Zealand European (93.7%) It is worth noting that over 20% of respondents were over 70.

Those who were not satisfied felt that their problems with arthritis- particularly the associated pain were not understood well and often were not seen as important- the “its only a bit of arthritis” attitude being too prevalent and the “learn to live with it” being an all too common response.

Respondents also recognised the importance of people learning how to best utilise their time with health professionals- in particular preparing for appointments so the limited time available is utilised as effectively as possible. The point was also made that in rural and remote areas there is often no choice of GPs so it’s important that Arthritis New Zealand continues to work towards arthritis being recognised as a public health priority.

Those who were satisfied with the management of their arthritis identified communication skills



and empathy as two of the most important qualities their health professionals demonstrated. A third on the respondents also identified being able to stay in work as being key in their management of arthritis – highlighting the need for us to keep building awareness that arthritis affects all age groups and good management of arthritis can contribute to people being able to participate in the paid workforce.

We will utilise the results of this survey in our election year activities to bring these issues to the attention of MPs and aspiring MPs.

Our next survey is on joint replacement and the link to this is on our website www.arthritis.org.nz

Thank you, The Warehouse!

Arthritis New Zealand is grateful to Region 4 of the Warehouse for its ongoing support.

This includes support for our recent Arthritis Children’s Camp (see page 9), and supporting us through the sale of kiwi soft toys.

But the support of The Warehouse does not stop there. Some of the Warehouses in the region have been holding a ‘bake-off’ to see who can raise the most funds.

Pictured are staff from The Warehouse in Palmerston North, who are appropriately attired in orange hats!

Thank you, The Warehouse!



General election: the issues for people with arthritis

Now that 20 September has been set for the date of the general election, we are looking at how we can raise issues that are important for people with arthritis. We have identified three major issues we will focus on:

- We will be asking for arthritis to be a priority – on the basis of the numbers of people; the cost involved; the current health burden; elective surgery waiting lists etc.
- We are looking for some specific reforms regarding the ACC process with regard to musculoskeletal injuries that are currently declined due to underlying degeneration.
- We have some specific requests regarding the access to employment for people with arthritis.



We do need people who are keen to help us raise these important issues during the election campaign and we will be utilising a mix of traditional media along with social media and some imaginative new initiatives. If you are interested, or have some

ideas, we would love to hear from you.

Email francesca.holloway@arthritis.org.nz or call 0800 663 463, and ask to talk to Francesca

Buller Marathon

It has been described as 'the most scenic athletic event in New Zealand'. And given that the Buller Marathon passes through the breathtaking Buller Gorge, it is pretty hard to argue with that. This year, Arthritis New Zealand was supported by Christine Mabon.

If you are a keen distance runner, you may like to consider participating in the Auckland Marathon on 2 November, and raise money for Arthritis New Zealand in the process! Entries are now open, and November is not very far away. We have two places available in the Full Marathon, 12 in the Half Marathon, and one in the Quarter Marathon.

So form a team, and start training now! For further information, go to: www.aucklandmarathon.co.nz/listings/new-zealand-listings/



Arthritis New Zealand's refreshed website is expected to be live later this month! Keep watching www.arthritis.org.nz

Osteoarthritis does not always equal old age



When people first receive the diagnosis of osteoarthritis (OA), they often think, 'oh no, I'm getting old'. However, while fifty per cent of people over the age of 65 years and everyone over the age of 80 years will have osteoarthritic changes on the x-rays, age is only one factor that can lead to the development of osteoarthritis. Many factors can contribute to the development of OA. Our genetic make up (family history), previous joint injury, occupation and increasing body weight can all contribute to the development and the progression of OA. In a country obsessed with participation in contact sports such as rugby, soccer and netball, previous injury is a large contributing factor.

When interviewed for national TV two years ago, orthopaedic surgeon Mr Jeremy Stanley stated that most (if not all) of his father's old rugby teammates were struggling with arthritic knees, hips or shoulders. His father's old rugby team was of course the World Cup winning 1987 All Blacks. The age of these men now ranges from late forties to early fifties, hardly old men. Yet a number had already undergone joint replacement surgery for OA as a result of injuries that occurred during their playing days. So the notion of OA as solely an old persons' disease is far from true.

The other thing that people often think when they receive this diagnosis is 'so when do I have surgery?' Surgery is often viewed as the only or the main way of managing osteoarthritis. While it is often a very effective management strategy, there are a number of other things that can be done first that can be equally as effective. Joint replacement surgery is often described as having a 'life' of 15-20 years. This means that if you have a hip joint replacement at 50 years of age, by 82 years of age you may have had three! Therefore it is worth putting off surgery for a bit if you can and exploring other options first.

There is a growing body of evidence that not all OA behaves in the same manner and what we now typically categorise as a single disease, may in fact be more than one condition. For some people the disease appears to progress rapidly but for others the symptoms can stay the same for years or even settle with time. Furthermore, this



notion that OA may in fact be more than one condition helps to explain why for some people OA can be a very painful debilitating disease and for others it is a mild nuisance. If the OA that is affecting your joint(s) is in fact a type that may not progress rapidly, opting for surgery early may not been the best choice.

There are a number of other strategies that have been shown to help when you have OA. These include interventions such as exercise, physiotherapy and osteopathy, weight loss, strapping or bracing of a joint, ice or heating to reduce pain, changes in footwear, the use of medication and dietary changes. Often receiving guidance from a health care professional such as your GP or local physiotherapist is a good place to start.

Making changes to your lifestyle can be a challenging thing to do. Never try to change everything in one go; this usually ends in failure and disappointment. Pick one thing that you can manage and just start with this. It might be as simple as completing a 10 minute walk three times per week. Remember any changes that you make will take a while to be effective. I usually tell my patients that a change may take 6 to 12 weeks to have an impact on their pain, mobility or their strength, so be patient. The other thing to remember is that unlike surgery, losing weight or getting fitter will not only improve your joint pain but will improve your general health and wellbeing too.

Daniel O'Brien

Lecturer – Physiotherapy Department, AUT University, Auckland.

(Daniel is currently undertaking his PhD and is exploring the clinical management of osteoarthritis in New Zealand).

E-Updates, and events section on website

Remember that Arthritis New Zealand publishes monthly E-Updates to keep you up to date with what's happening in your region, and across the country. If we don't already have your email address, please tell us, so we can add you to the list. Just go to our website: www.arthritis.org.nz There's a field on the homepage where you can enter your email address. It's that easy. Our website also has an events section, which will tell you what is happening in your region.

A story of gout

One of our clients tells the story of his journey with gout. We have granted him anonymity because of the shame and embarrassment that can be wrongly associated with gout. Arthritis New Zealand is working hard to dispel these misconceptions. We hope this story will help.

How long have you had gout?

About 6 years but at first I didn't know it was gout – it took a few doctor's visits to be diagnosed.

When was this diagnosed – how old were you?

24

How old are you now?

I turn 30 this year.

Has anyone else in your family had / got gout?

Yes, both my Mum and Dad and one of my sisters.

Did you realise that's what you had when the pain started?

No, it initially started in my ankle and I thought it must have been an injury or something I had done at work – this was when it took a while for a diagnosis, I had x-rays and a few assessments by different doctors and eventually our old family GP mentioned it may be gout.

Are you taking any medication? If so, what?

Yes, I have been trying to manage attacks with Voltaren and Colchicine for a long time now and tried to avoid going



Community Gout Champions in Auckland

on long term meds by diet change but my attacks have been much too frequent and severe so have also just recently started Allopurinol... hoping to see some results.

How did getting the diagnosis make you feel?

It makes me feel ashamed and embarrassed to tell people that I have gout especially in my Pacific Island culture, if you have gout my family and friends think it's hilarious, but I don't see the funny side of it. A lot of people just assume you've been on a bender, eaten too many oysters, or just eaten too much, 'The disease of kings' – sometimes I wish this was the case! This is frustrating and I think it's mainly due to the fact gout has been around for so long, so common amongst Māori and Pacific Island men that it has in

some way become part of life. You eat and drink too much you get gout. The truth is, there is a lack of knowledge and education on what gout actually is. **What impact does having gout have on your life and on your work?**

Gout is having a huge impact on my life and work; I am a tradesman which is a relatively active job. The gout usually affects my feet and ankles but has at times flared up in my hands. When it is in my feet, I can't walk, and I obviously need my hands in my job! I have had to take weeks off work at a time, meaning less/no income for me and my family. It is like a vicious cycle as to help get rid of the gout I need to get fit and exercise but can't do this when I can barely walk. It is a very depressing condition, when at its worst, I feel useless and it is killing my life.

Support group turns ten

The Cambridge Arthritis Support Group has now turned ten, having been formed at the end of 2003 to support local people who were affected by arthritis.

The group's members benefit from the sharing, socialising and support of each other and understand the needs and challenges that each other face.

At its monthly meetings, the group has talks from medical professionals and other of interest, followed by afternoon tea. And most years, the group

organises a trip out of town. If you are in Cambridge and are interested in joining the group, attending a meeting, or finding out more, phone the group's President, Karen Coleman, President, on 07 827 0442 or email karen-coleman@hotmail.com

To find out the nearest support groups in other parts of the country, phone Arthritis New Zealand toll free on 0800 663 463, and ask to speak with the Regional Coordinator.

Old phones wanted

We are still accepting unwanted old mobile phones. So if you have an unwanted mobile phone, send it to: Freepost 157311, Arthritis New Zealand, PO Box 10 020, The Terrace, Wellington 6143. We will then get it recycled, and receive a reward for it. So you won't only be supporting us, you will be looking after the environment as well!

JOINT SUPPORT

New products

Arthritis New Zealand is pleased to announce that it has two new products available

Milk Mate



This device removes the foil beneath the cap of plastic milk bottles. It sells for \$5.60.

Floating Plug Puller



This device helps with pulling plugs from sinks. It sells for \$3.50.

Both products are available from our National Office. Phone 0800 663 463 for further information.



Arthritis New Zealand Southern Regional Fundraiser Emma Barker checks out our tokens.

Arthritis New Zealand was one of the charities chosen by Z-Energy stations throughout the country to benefit from their *Good in the Hood* scheme, in which customers received tokens, and used them to vote for a charity. We were delighted to be chosen by 20 Z-Energy service stations, and we received \$20,000 in donations from those sites.

We are grateful to Z-Energy for including us in this amazing initiative.

Do you have a current will?

There are several good reasons for ensuring that you have a valid and up-to-date will:

To protect loved ones. And it is only by means of a valid will that you can be certain that your family and friends will be taken care of when you are no longer there.

Once you have taken care of those who are close to you, you may like to remember Arthritis New Zealand. We are always overwhelmed when we receive advice of a bequest. These gifts ensure our work continues for generations and confirms the importance of supporting the 530,00 New Zealanders with arthritis.

Big or small your bequest will be greatly appreciated. It will help us to continue to provide services now and into the future.

If you would like to talk to someone about leaving a bequest to Arthritis New Zealand or more information, please call 0800 663 463 and ask to speak to Dianne Armstrong, or email: dianne.armstrong@arthritis.org.nz



Do you Zusu?

Do you Zusu? We do! And we'd love you to Zusu too! Zusu is the only discount and donation programme in New Zealand that gives you real savings, and donates money to us, every time you use your Zusu card to buy every-day purchases.

Quite simply, Zusu membership is a true win-win.

- As soon as you become a Zusu member, a \$10 donation will come straight to us when you choose Arthritis New Zealand as your nominated charity.
- Then, each and every time you use your Zusu card, 0.5% of the transaction total will come to us too. It won't cost you a cent and creates a new and sustainable source of funds for us.
- You get access to exclusive discounts, special offers and preferential deals not available to non-Zusu members – and these occur at the point of purchase in real money or value, without having to wait or collect points in any way.
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The usual price of the card is \$69, but use the promo code below when you join online and you'll be able to buy the card for just \$20, giving you a saving you \$49 and triggering a \$10 donation to us straight away when you choose us as your nominated charity.

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Did you know that you can also donate online?

Visit www.arthritis.org.nz.

Please fill in this donation slip and post back to us:

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Arthritis New Zealand
PO Box 10020
Wellington 6143

Thank you for your generosity!

JOINT SUPPORT

For further information...

Call free 0800 663 463

When you phone our free 0800 number you will be put in contact with one of our trained Arthritis Educators, who can give you advice and support on managing your arthritis. You can also find out about your region's support groups, and when an Arthritis Educator will next be visiting your district.

Make a donation

Did you know that by phoning 0900 333 20, you can make an automatic \$20 donation to support the more than 530,000 New Zealanders who are living with arthritis?

Visit www.arthritis.org.nz

Visit our website for the latest news about arthritis, information about different types of arthritis, downloadable brochures, to find out what's on in your area, and more.

Regional Offices

Northern (Auckland) 09 523 8910
Midland/Central (Wellington) 04 472 1427
Southern (Christchurch) 03 366 8383

National Office

Level 2, 166 Featherston Street, PO Box 10 020, The Terrace, Wellington 6143
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