Spring is finally here, and other than some cold weather, winter wasn't much to talk about. I know the fellow who shovels my snow wasn't too happy.

We have just completed half of our fiscal year, and we continue to be very busy. Our second annual walk at Montclair State University (MSU) was scheduled for Sunday, May 1, 2016. Unfortunately, it was postponed due to the rain. We are planning to hold the MSU walk at some point in the coming months.

On the very brisk morning of Sunday, May 15, 2016, we held an inaugural walk at Morris County Community College, in Randolph, New Jersey.

On Saturday, May 21, 2016, we held our annual business meeting and educational seminar at the Springfield Free Public Library in Springfield, New Jersey, and our annual fundraiser, the Monmouth Park Fun Day in Oceanport, New Jersey. The annual business meeting and educational program included our guest speaker Dr. Lakshmi N. Moorthy, a pediatric rheumatologist from Robert Wood Johnson Medical Center in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Dr. Moorthy gave an engaging presentation on teenage and adolescents living lupus.

In addition to the educational program that morning, the membership voted on the nominations for the Board of Directors and we held an awards ceremony honoring the following individuals:

- Debbie Kohn, member of the Board of Directors: received the Butterfly of Hope Award in recognition of her fundraising efforts (pictured below with Lenny Andriuzzi)
- Melissa Klein, Mercer County Support Facilitator: awarded the Cathy Lee Iczkowski Award for her service and dedication (pictured below with Lenny Andriuzzi)
- Sal Lataro, former member of the Board of Directors: posthumously received the Salvatore Lataro Humanitarian Award for his service and dedication (award received by Steve and Ginny Lataro, Sal’s son and daughter-in-law; pictured below with Lenny Andriuzzi and Ranit Shriky)
- Lastly, the individuals and teams who raised the most funds for our annual Walk to End Lupus Now, held in October 2015, were recognized for their fundraising efforts. (Rosario Family, pictured below with Lenny Andriuzzi and Ranit Shriky, received one of the winning walk team awards; Beverley [Board Secretary] with, husband, Ed Danner, [pictured with Lenny Andriuzzi] received an appreciation award; and Laura Iarkowski, with her father, Dick Gottlick, [pictured with Lenny Andriuzzi and Ranit Shriky] received one of the winning walk team awards.)
On Saturday, June 4, 2016, we will be hosting our annual fashion show at Costa’s Restaurant in Roselle Park, New Jersey. We hope you can join for this fantastic event filled with fashions, music, a tricky tray, lots of food and lots of fun.

Our annual three-month (July-September) calendar raffle starts on July 1, 2016. Tickets are currently available for $10.00 for each raffle ticket. They easy to sell and every ticket holder has 92 chances of winning, for each ticket he/she holds. So let’s get selling!

On Thursday, July 21, 2016, we will be hosting Lupus Awareness Night at the Somerset Patriots game, held at the TD Ball Park in Bridgewater, New Jersey. Tickets are available for $11.00 each and should be purchased through the Lupus Foundation of America, New Jersey Chapter, Inc. (LFANJ) web site at www.lupusnj.org. It is a great night that includes an evening of amazing fireworks. Bring your family, friends, colleagues, and most importantly bring yourself. You will have a wonderful time. We promise!

Finally, we have scheduled our annual Walk to End Lupus Now™ at Nomahegan Park in Cranford, New Jersey for Sunday, October 23, 2016. Get those sneakers ready!

We cannot stress enough, that we are here for you and your families. We will attempt to answer your questions about lupus, provide up-to-date literature on the disease, and assist with physician referrals. There are presently five support groups for peer-to-peer conversations, and we are looking to expand these support groups in a few more counties.

In addition to everything noted above, we sponsor educational seminars, attend health fairs, speak at events, support research, and, although you may not be aware, participate with other advocacy groups to influence legislation in the State of New Jersey. We will be sending out a separate report on our advocacy efforts in the near future. As you can read in this newsletter, on a national basis, the Lupus Foundation of America, Inc. (LFA), with which we have an affiliation agreement, is promoting and advocating, on a Federal level, for better treatments for people suffering from lupus.

When people learn that we are a non-profit organization, they sometimes misperceive how we function. We literally are a small business that is classified as a non-profit agency. We are not in business to make a profit, but our goal is to help those affected by lupus. We still have normal day-to-day expenses, that any business would incur. These include: rent, utilities, salaries, leasing of equipment, office supplies, printing, speaker honoraria, postage, etc. As you read this newsletter, please remember that it takes man hours, printing costs, and mailing expenses to send this to you. Why do we share this with you? It is simple. We must hold fundraisers, calendar raffles, holiday raffles and other events to keep us in business. We could not exist without your financial support and participation in these events. We thank you for your past support and contributions, and ask that if you have benefited by something we have done, please participate in a walk, come to a fundraising event or volunteer to be part of our fundraising committee.

Wishing you all a great and safe summer,

Leonard J. Andriuzzi, Esq. Ranit C. Shriky
President and CEO Chairman, Board of Directors

Help Raise Funds with the LFANJ Shopping Mall and our Partners

It is very simple. Go onto our website, http://www.lupusnj.org, and click on our Donate button. Select the New Jersey Chapter, Inc. Shopping Mall link or click on the rotating ad on the homepage for the shopping mall. Then, click on the logo for the store you wish to visit and follow the prompts. The key is to enter the store's web site by first going through our web site. If you go directly to their website, the LFANJ will not get credit. By shopping online, and using the LFANJ web site, you will be purchasing the goods and services that you want, and you will also be helping to support the LFANJ and our lupus community. Every time you shop, you will making a difference. So start shopping!

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you’ll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization. You can choose from nearly one million organizations to support, including the Lupus Foundation of America, New Jersey Chapter, Inc. To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to smile.amazon.com from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. On your first visit to AmazonSmile, you need to select a charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. We will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make will result in a donation.
We Lead Scientific Initiatives to Address Barriers in Lupus Drug Development

Submitted by Jason Konig Health Educator and Case Manager

As part of our three-pronged research strategy, the Lupus Foundation of America leads scientific initiatives to address gaps in areas of lupus research that have not received adequate attention or funding. We take on the most perplexing issues, including scientific challenges others thought too complex to overcome.

Lupus symptoms vary from one person to another. In many cases, the best treatment approach is with a health care team that will tailor treatment to your specific condition.

Today, physicians treat lupus using a wide variety of medicines, ranging in strength from mild to extremely strong. Prescribed medications will usually change during a person’s lifetime with lupus. However, it can take months—sometimes years—before your health care team finds just the right combination of medicines to keep your lupus symptoms under control.

There are many categories of drugs physicians use to treat lupus. However, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration or “FDA” has approved only a few specifically for lupus, which include:

- Corticosteroids, including prednisone, prednisolone, methylprednisolone, and hydrocortisone
- Antimalarials, such as hydroxychloroquine (Plaquenil®) and chloroquine
- The monoclonal antibody belimumab (Benlysta®)
- Acthar (repository corticotropin injection), which contains a naturally occurring hormone called ACTH (adrenocorticotropic hormone)
- Aspirin

A rheumatologist, a doctor who specializes in diseases of the joints and muscles, generally treats people with lupus. If lupus has caused damage to a particular organ, other specialists will be consulted. For instance, a dermatologist for cutaneous lupus (skin disease), a cardiologist for heart disease, a nephrologist for kidney disease, a neurologist for brain and nervous system disease, or a gastroenterologist for gastrointestinal tract disease. A woman with lupus who is considering a pregnancy needs an obstetrician who specializes in high-risk pregnancies.

Once you have been diagnosed with lupus, your doctor will develop a treatment plan based on your age, symptoms, general health, and lifestyle. The goals of any treatment plan are to:

- Reduce inflammation caused by lupus
- Suppress your overactive immune system
- Prevent flares, and treat them when they occur
- Control symptoms like joint pain and fatigue
- Minimize damage to organs

Why Donate?

- Donations are tax deductible
- Giving to charity may improve your sense of well-being
- Giving to charity out of spiritual conviction can strengthen your spiritual life
- Volunteering with a charity may result in physical and social benefits
- Set an example
- Be part of something bigger
- Giving to charity is an opportunity to give something back
- Charity reflects on your own inner values
- Because you can make a difference in the lives of those affected by Lupus

Membership Renewal  Now is the time to renew your membership with the LFANJ. If you were a member and have let your membership lapse, consider renewing. Being a member means that you will receive our quarterly newsletter, an update on the latest in lupus research and educational programs, the national Lupus Now® magazine, and information on our upcoming educational seminars and fundraisers. Your membership dues help us to provide the services to the people affected by lupus and their families. Thank you for taking the time to renew your membership!
NON-PHARMACOLOGIC APPROACHES TO FRACTURE PREVENTION

by Stephen Honig, MD, MSC, Director, Osteoporosis Center, NYU Langone Hospital for Joint Diseases, New York, New York

Osteoporosis is a condition characterized by a decrease in bone strength and an increase in the incidence of certain fractures. The fractures associated with osteoporosis are called fragility fractures and preventing such fractures is the reason doctors prescribe bone strengthening medications. Prescription drug treatments used to strengthen bone and decrease the frequency of fragility fractures are just one component of an overall fracture reduction strategy. Non-drug treatments also help to reduce the rates of fractures in people with osteoporosis and these modalities should be part of a comprehensive fracture reduction program.

Most fractures occur as a result of a fall and falls prevention strategies are a very important and effective way to prevent fractures. 30% of people aged 65 years and older experience at least one fall each year and half of these people experience recurrent falls. Balance training programs include muscle strengthening exercises and programs such as Tai Chi, both of which have resulted in significantly fewer falls in populations at increased risk for falls. Recommended exercises for patients with osteoporosis include spinal extension and strength training regimens that include weight bearing and flexibility exercise programs. Strength training includes the use of free weights, weight machines and/or resistance bands and weight bearing regimens involve exercises done while standing on both feet. These could include any combination of walking, dancing, stair climbing and even ‘low impact’ aerobics. It is also important to avoid high impact activities such as jumping, running or jogging as they may put increased pressure on weak bones and lead to a fracture. Similarly, bending at the waist to touch ones toes, doing sit-ups or using a rowing machine are not recommended because these activities increase the mechanical forces across vulnerable vertebral bodies in the lower and mid spinal regions and may lead to spinal compression fractures.

Falls prevention strategies also include common sense strategies that can help prevent a fracture. Proper shoes that provide good support and are not likely to slip (nonskid shoes) on a hard floor or a damp surface can protect against stumbling and falling. Removing hazards in the home that lead to trips should be part of a falls prevention strategy. Securing loose rugs with tape and moving and securing wires from lamps, phones and other devices away from heavily trafficked areas in the home can reduce the likelihood of falling. Proper lighting in the home including a readily accessible bedside lamp will make a home safer and more easily navigable. The bathroom is an area of particular concern as bathroom floors and tubs can be particularly dangerous. Grab bars inside outside the tub or shower can help individuals get in and out of the tub more safely and the use of protective rubber mats can reduce slipping while in the tub or shower. Stairways can be dangerous and nonslip treads or carpeting on bare wood steps can help prevent slipping and falling. Handrails on both sides of stairways help secure passage up and down as safely as possible. Vitamin D supplementation may help improve muscle strength and balance function and has been shown to reduce falls in a number of research studies. Ask your doctor if you need to take any extra vitamin D tablets.

There is a role for both drug and non-drug treatments for fracture prevention and individuals with osteoporosis should discuss both approaches with their physician.
LIVING WELL WITH LUPUS

Submitted by Jason Konig Health Educator Case Manager

Why is exercise so important in managing lupus, and what exercises could I do with lupus?
Whether or not a person has lupus, exercise is an important way to take care of yourself. Exercise has many physical, emotional and social benefits. It is particularly helpful for people with lupus for many reasons, and most people with lupus can take part in some form of activity.

From a physical standpoint, exercise can strengthen parts of your body that may be affected by lupus — the heart, lungs, bones and joints. It can help reduce inflammation by regulating some of the chemicals involved in the inflammation process. Exercise can help control weight gain caused by use of corticosteroid medications and keep your body conditioned. It can also reduce fatigue. Regular exercise and even simple low-impact movement will make muscles less stiff, increase your range of motion and help you reduce the risk of heart disease.

Exercise may also boost your mental health, making it easier to cope with life stressors and potentially improving mood and self-esteem. Exercising with a buddy can give you the moral support to stick with your exercise routine while making your fitness time double as social time.

Be sure to discuss your exercise plans with your physician or exercise specialist in order to maximize results and minimize possible harm. Activities such as walking, swimming, bicycling, low-impact aerobics, certain types of yoga, Pilates, stretching, water exercise or using an elliptical exercise machine will strengthen your bones and tone your muscles without aggravating inflamed joints. At the same time, these activities help to lower the risk for developing osteoporosis. It’s also a good idea to vary the exercises, so that different muscle groups all get a regular workout.

If you are experiencing swollen joints or muscle pain, you should avoid or at least limit activities that may be demanding on joints and muscles, such as jogging, weightlifting, or high-impact aerobics.

If you find that you tire easily when you exercise, you should pace yourself. The most important thing to remember is to not give up exercising, as muscles that are not used will quickly become weak.

Always consult with your doctor before starting new treatment options. Lupus Foundation of America, Inc. "Living Well With Lupus" Medically reviewed on September 2013.

Support Group News
Come join one of our support group meetings, and learn about lupus and address your concerns. Connect with others who have lupus and make new friends. The support group meeting listing is available as a separate flyer in this edition of the Lupus Link. It can also be located on our website: www.lupusnj.org.

Ongoing Support Group Recruitment
We are currently seeking support group leaders in the following counties: Somerset, Hunterdon, and Ocean, in addition, we also interested in volunteers who would like to help with occasional health fair on Saturdays.

Check out the updated Support Group Meeting Flyer in this issue of the Lupus Link!

Helpful Websites and Resources on Lupus, Physician Referrals and Clinical Trials

www.ClinicalTrials.gov
www.HealthGrades.com
www.lupusnj.org
www.RA.com
www.Rheumatology.org
www.TheLupusInitiative.org

Organize an Event or Activity If you are interest in organizing an event or activity on behalf of the Lupus Foundation of America, New Jersey Chapter, Inc. please advise the office of your interest in supporting the Foundation. We can provide information on lupus and help make your event or activity fun and educational. To find out more information please visit our web site at www.lupusnj.org or call the office at 973-379-3226. Thank your for your interest and support of the LFANJ.

Resources Available for the Lupus Community

Partnership For Prescription Assistance helps qualifying patients who lack prescription coverage get the medication they need through the public or private program for free or at a savings (www.PfizerRXPathways.com)

Catholic Charities provides non denominational emergency assistance, food, clothing, shelter, and counseling services to those in need (catholiccharitiesusa.org).
Fighting Inflammation

Heart disease, cancer, Alzheimer’s disease, the metabolic syndrome, physical disability. That’s just a partial list of the illnesses that have been linked to chronic inflammation.

“It’s different from the classic, red, swelling, white-cell kind of inflammation that we’re used to thinking of,” explains Walter Willett, chair of the Nutrition Department at the Harvard School of Public Health.

Instead, it’s more of a slow burn that’s detected only by a rise in inflammatory signals, or markers—proteins produced by the immune system to fight infection or heal an injury (though not the kind of injury you can necessarily see or feel). The question is: how can you douse the flames? So far, only one thing is clear, says Willett. “The most powerful way to reduce your inflammatory factors is to lose excess weight.”

Omega-3 vs. Omega-6 Fats

Why would omega-3 fats—like the EPA and DHA in fish oil or the ALA in flaxseed—quiet inflammation?

“It goes back to the idea that the omega-6 fatty acids produce eicosanoids that have pro-inflammatory effects,” explains William Harris of the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine. (Corn, soybean, and sunflower oils are rich in omega-6s.)

“The omega-3 fats produce their own version of those eicosanoids, which are kinder and gentler,” he adds.

That’s how omega-3s got their anti-inflammatory reputation. “And it’s been seen in some rheumatoid arthritis trials,” where inflammation is rampant and “where relatively high doses of omega-3s reduce sore joints,” says Harris.

At first, the evidence that omega-3s could also quell inflammation in people with lower levels of inflammation seemed promising.

“Studies found that people with higher omega-3 intakes had lower inflammatory marker levels,” says Harris. But when researchers gave omega-3s to people with or without heart disease, inflammation didn’t budge.

“In the majority of studies where they’ve given fish oil to people in a randomized trial, it didn’t lower inflammatory markers,” acknowledges Harris, who is also president and CEO of a company that measures omega-3 levels in red blood cells. “There are counter examples, but that’s the usual experience.”

It’s not clear why. “It could take years of a high intake to change the markers,” Harris suggests. “Or it could be that people who eat more fish are more careful about other lifestyle factors,” and that’s why they have less inflammation.

Another possibility: maybe the studies aren’t measuring the right thing.

“If you get exposed to bacteria or a virus, you want an inflammatory response because it helps with healing and fighting the infection,” says Penn State’s Penny Kris-Etherton. “It’s only when the inflammation smolders for a long time that it wreaks havoc.”

So she’s launching a new study to test the body’s response to infection. “We’re giving people EPA and DHA—the omega-3s in fish oil—at different doses over a long period of time, and then injecting them with E. coli bacteria at a very, very low dose,” she explains.

The question: “If you supersaturate your cells and membranes with omega-3 fatty acids, will that not only quell an inflammatory response, but also quicken a resolution?”

Fish oil may protect the heart whether or not inflammation plays a role. In one Italian trial, fish oil lowered the risk of a second heart attack. And in a Japanese trial on 18,000 people who were taking cholesterol-lowering statin drugs, EPA helped those who had high triglycerides and low HDL (“good”) cholesterol. “They had a 50 percent drop in risk of cardiac events,” notes Harris.

In view of those trials and other evidence, the American Heart Association recommends that everyone eat fatty fish at least twice a week.

Other Foods

- Mediterranean diet. Italian researchers assigned 180 people with the metabolic syndrome to eat either a Mediterranean diet (rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, and olive oil and low in saturated fat) or to follow advice on “healthy food choices.”

  After two years, the Mediterranean group had lower levels of several inflammatory markers, but that may be because they also lost more weight.

- Olive oil & nuts. In a Spanish study of roughly 100 people at risk for cardiovascular disease, inflammatory markers dropped more in those assigned to eat a Mediterranean diet with extra olive oil or nuts than in those who ate the same diet without extra olive oil or nuts. But results from other studies differ.

  - Whole grains. In three studies, inflammatory markers were no lower in people assigned to eat whole grains than in those who got refined grains.

  - Fruits & vegetables. In a German study, men who were told to eat 8 servings of fruits and vegetables a day had lower levels of the inflammatory marker C-reactive protein (CRP) than those told to eat 2 servings a day, but the difference was partly due to a rise in CRP in the 2-serving group. Another study found no change in CRP when overweight postmenopausal women were told to eat 2, 5, or 10 servings of vegetables a day.

  - Legumes. In a Spanish study of 30 obese men and women, those told to cut calories and eat four servings (each about a cup) of lentils, chickpeas, peas, or beans a week had lower CRP levels than those who cut calories without eating legumes. (The beans lost more weight, but the researchers adjusted for that.)

  But none of that is enough evidence to be sure that beans—or any foods—matter. The bottom line: replacing meats, sweets, and refined grains with beans, fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fish—and substituting oils for butter and margarine—is smart, even if it doesn’t change your inflammatory markers one iota.

The Bottom Line

1. Inflammation has been linked to heart disease, cancer, metabolic syndrome, Alzheimer’s disease, and musculoskeletal loss with aging. But the evidence is inconclusive that lowering inflammation prevents these diseases.

2. Losing excess weight is the best way to curb inflammation.

3. Exercise can reduce inflammation if it helps you lose weight or if you have high levels of inflammation, which are common among older people.

4. It’s wise to eat a diet rich in seafood, beans, vegetables, fruit, and whole grains and to replace butter and margarine with oils. However, it’s too early to know if these changes can curb inflammation.