

# CMSCenterPiece

The 2008 CMSC Annual Meeting Newsletter

Denver, CO

Edited by June Halper and James Simsarian, MD • May 31, 2008

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## Successful Launch of

***Esclerosis Múltiple***—In a bilingual presentation on Thursday evening, we celebrated the launch of the second issue of this groundbreaking Spanish language textbook on MS. The revision and publication of this book was sponsored by a grant from Bayer. Dr. Jorge Nogales-Gaete (left), one of the editors, signed free copies for Dr. Corey Ford (center) and other attendees.



## John Whitaker Lecture

In Friday morning's Whitaker Lecture, Dr. Michael Racke of Ohio State University described recent developments in our understanding of the immunopathogenicity of MS. Because the T-cells in MS patients are fundamentally different from those in the healthy population, the mouse model of MS—experimental autoimmune encephalomyelitis—has been critical for looking at the molecular mechanisms that regulate T-cell differentiation. Although this model does have limitations, it has been useful for developing molecular therapies such as glatiramer acetate. Further understanding of the genetic program that underlies T-cell responses in MS patients will be critical in developing new therapies.

## CIS—What Do We Know? What Do We Do?

Because critical neurological damage occurs early in the course of MS, identifying and treating the CIS at these initial stages is critically important for achieving the best possible outcome. For these reasons, a correct, early diagnosis of clinically isolated syndrome (CIS) that will lead to MS could be critical to improving patient outcomes.

In a session organized by Dr. Mark Freedman, speakers used a “top 10” framework to describe what we know about diagnosing early stage MS and interpreting early MRI scans. Dr. Heather MacLean also noted that misdiagnosis of MS—typically overdiagnosis—occurs about 10% of the time. She described 10 conditions ranging from stroke and migraine to lupus and Lyme disease that can appear to be early stage MS. She cautioned clinicians to use diagnostic tools thoughtfully, to watch for red flags and, when in doubt, to hold off until certain.

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## **Outcome Measures for Fatigue and Gait**

Chaired by Brian Hutchinson, PT, this session summarized a previous CMSC consensus conference looking at outcome measures for fatigue and gait. Rehabilitation specialists have not come to a consensus on these outcome measures because they are complex measures with many components and with many methods to measure these outcomes. They did come to consensus on several points:

- Validated measures are needed for gait measures in MS.
- It is important to look at assessment and outcome measures for rehabilitation.
- We have good outcome measures for fatigue, but we need a fatigue assessment battery to use clinically.
- We need an effective method for providing this information specifically to clinicians.

Hutchinson and his colleagues plan to submit a journal article this summer summarizing their findings.

## **Platform Presentation Highlights**

Forty to fifty percent of MS patients also experience depression. In “Cognition and Depression,” a UK study illustrated how mental health nurses can work with other health professionals to provide a beneficial service to MS patients. In addition, Peggy Crawford, Ph.D., discussed her group’s findings that somatic items—such as fatigue—on the Beck Depression Inventory-II do not necessarily confound the depression scores of individuals with MS.

In one of the presentations on “Psychosocial Issues,” Dr. Alexander Rae-Grant discussed a pilot study looking at MS literacy among MS patients at the Mellen Center at the Cleveland Clinic. This small pilot study of 24 patients examined whether patients could define 24 terms related to MS. Patients could define 17% of the terms, when doctors expected that they would be able to understand 70% of the terms. Therefore, there seems to be a gap between patients’ knowledge and what clinicians think that they should know. Dr. Rae-Grant and his colleagues are working on interventions, including a glossary of terms on their website and new patient handouts.

## **Saturday Highlights**

8:00 am—CMSC Lecture “Multiple Sclerosis: The Big Questions” by Dr. Richard Rudick

12:00 pm—CMSC Business Meeting (Capitol 1-3)

7:00 pm—Our farewell party and concert starring Clay Walker (Capitol Ballroom and Foyer)

**Mark your calendars for next year’s CMSC meeting! The Second Joint Annual Meeting of CMSC/ACTRIMS in Atlanta, GA, May 27-30, 2009!**