

In each issue, a member of TSA's Medical Advisory Board addresses medical questions that affect people with TS and their families. This issue's contributor is Leon S. Dure, M.D., Associate Professor of Pediatrics & Neurology, Children's Hospital, AL.

For the past year we have been trying to find the right medication for our daughter. My doctor keeps changing the dosage and switching one medication for another. Is this typical?

Your experience is all too common. It reflects the complexity of treating Tourette Syndrome, and any co-morbid problems. Unfortunately, there are no "magic bullets" for addressing TS, so it is imperative that you, your daughter and her physician are clear about what exactly you are trying to treat. To compound the difficulties, a number of commonly used medications for tics, OCD, and ADD have unwanted, and sometimes unpredictable side effects, necessitating changes and alterations of dosages and types of medications. Lastly, as you well know, the symptoms of TS fluctuate, sometimes in spite of a stable medication regimen. I would urge you to have frank discussions with your daughter's treating physician, with the goal of understanding the overall plan of management. This will help both of you anticipate potential problems, and further aid the physician with treatment options. Furthermore, besides understanding the plan of management, it is very important that the goals of therapy are the same for you, your daughter and the physician.

My 11-year-old son has a painful neck tic. Is massage therapy a good treatment for this or will it exacerbate his tics?

There are no published reports exploring massage therapy in a controlled fashion for the alleviation of tics. To be fair, however, such a study would be difficult to do because of the inability to "blind" the subjects. In my clinic population there have been a number of children who have had massage therapy with some positive improvement in tics. Your specific question is in regard to a painful neck tic, and in this instance, if there is any degree of spasm related to the tic, then certainly massage can be of benefit. To my knowledge, there is no evidence that massage would worsen such a tic.

My son was put on Catapres (Clonidine) patch for his TS symptoms, but developed an allergic skin reaction. He is now taking the Catapres pill. Is there any difference between the patch and the pill?

In terms of the actual medication, there is no difference between the clonidine patch and the pill. The difference lies in the method of delivery and rate at which the drug is introduced into the blood stream. It is believed that a patch, by delivering a drug through a transdermal route, can produce a smoother rate of rise of the medication, as well as a continuous delivery for a prolonged period of time. Therefore, instead of having to take a pill one, two, or even three times a day, a transdermal system needs only to be applied once. On the other hand, practical considerations may work against the use of a patch. For example, in hot climates, perspiration can interfere with the adhesive on a patch, causing it to fall off. Also, some patients develop an allergic reaction or skin irritation requiring removal of the patch. It has been recommended that application of a topical steroid at the site of patch placement can at least partially alleviate skin irritation.

New! TSA Video Vignettes Family Life with Tourette Syndrome . . . Personal Stories . . . A Six-Part Series

New from TSA . . . these six video Vignettes tell real life personal stories . . . there is a lot to be learned from the stories of Professor Peter, Reverend Mike, Rachel, The Turner Family (see "Family Portrait" in this issue), Ryan and Dakota. Six people, adults, teenagers, children, and their families . . . all affected by Tourette Syndrome . . . their lives filled with triumphs and setbacks . . . struggle and growth . . . share their TS stories. Informational and inspirational, these stories present universal issues and resonate with themes of hope, possibility, and love.

To order the six-part series (AV-11) for \$50.00 plus \$4.50 s&h, make check payable to TSA, and send to 42-40 Bell Blvd., Bayside, NY 11361.

Mozart and TS: Was There a Malady Behind the Melody?

Did Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart have Tourette Syndrome? Classical music fans—with and without TS—have asked that question many times, stirring an ongoing controversy about the genius. The latest expert to voice an opinion is Dr. Benjamin Simkin. In his book, *Medical and Musical Byways of Mozartiana* (Fithian Press, 1-800-662-8351, \$14.95 to order), Dr. Simkin argues that Mozart did indeed have TS.

He cites Mozart's frequent use of coarse bathroom humor, echoing of other people's words, restless movements and even some of the great composer's most innovative musical passages. Critics argue that Dr. Simkin's evidence remains unconvincing, and heated discussions will no doubt continue in musical circles.

While TSA takes no stand on the central question, we feel strongly about the need to correct the book's statement that coprolalia (outbursts of obscene and inappropriate language), is exhibited in "one third to one half of all TS cases." The accurate figure is only 10 to 15%.

