ASK THE MEDICAL ADVISORY BOARD

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 Cheston M. Berlin, Jr., University Professor of Pediatrics, The Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, Hershey, PA and a member of the TSA Medical Advisory Board.

Q I've read on the Internet that TS symptoms can erupt as a result of having repeated strep infections. I also heard that some physicians recommend the use of penicillin for extended periods as a way to prevent a recurrence of these infections. And what can you tell me about "plasmapheresis" as a method of reducing TS symptoms?

A The role of streptococcal infections in either precipitating or causing recurrence of TS symptoms remains controversial. The hypothesis is that streptococcal infections might cause the formation of antibodies that cross into the brain and affect those areas of the brain responsible for TS symptoms. A similar connection between streptococcal disease and symptoms of the brain disorder exist with Sydenham's Chorea (a complication of streptococcal infection that is rarely seen today).

There are some questions about the streptococcal hypothesis including the fact that many patients with TS experience increased symptoms with any type of stress including both viral and bacterial infections. It has also been very difficult to identify antibodies in many patients who have TS. Finally, the diagnosis of significant streptococcal infection with subsequent immune product formation remains elusive. Several groups are researching the potential connection. At the present time, it is not recommended that patients with TS receive long-term antibiotic therapy.

Plasmapheresis is a technique in which the patient's plasma is replaced by donor plasma. This has been used to treat a large number of what are called "autoimmune" diseases with varying degrees of success. It remains experimental.

Q My son has TS and may also have ADHD. His doctor prescribed Klonopin (clonazepam). Two weeks ago he suddenly began chasing cars and jumping out of stopped vehicles. Is this a side effect of the medication? Should I talk to his doctor immediately or wait and see if these new behaviors stop as suddenly as they began?

A Most of the physicians who treat patients with TS are aware that many of the medications used can have unpredictable and perhaps even previously un-described side effects. Any sudden change in a patient's behavior that coincides with the start of a new medication (new to the patient) should be considered a side effect. It is important to speak to the physician about these changes. Sometimes they are transitory and an interruption of the medication is not necessary. Discuss with your doctor whether you should stop the medication now or wait and see if the symptoms abate.

Q What is known about the possible association between TS symptoms and exposure to toxic chemicals that are thought to effect the nervous system? (e.g. Agent Orange)

A There is no proof that TS symptoms have been associated with exposure to toxic chemicals including Agent Orange.

Q My 16-year-old has been diagnosed with both Asperger's Syndrome (AS) and TS. He also has symptoms of OCD and autism. Is there any information about AS and TS occurring together?

A While there is no specific linkage between AS and TS, many physicians are aware of its concurrence in the same patient. Physicians who see a large number of patients with TS have several who have either AS or autism and also symptoms of TS. It is of interest that some of the medications that are used for TS may also improve the functioning of a child with autism.

BACK TO SCHOOL MUSTS

		QTY	PRICE	TOTAL
B-2	Tourette Syndrome – Q & A		$ .20	
B-2a	Q & A – Spanish		.20	
A-102b	Discipline and the Child w/TS		3.00	
A-105	Matthew and the Tics		1.00	
A-105a	Mateo y Los Tics		1.00	
A-109	Dear Diary, Sibling Brochure		3.00	
E-100	An Educator's Guide to TS		3.00	
E-101	Coping with TS in The Classroom		3.00	
E-108	TS and The School Nurse		3.00	
E-109	TS and The School Psychologist		3.00	
E-114	Recognizing TS in the Classroom		2.00	
E-115	Techniques to Aid the Student w/TS		1.00	
E-115b	Specific Classroom Strategies		2.00	
E-116	Learning Problems & the Child with TS		1.00	
M-311	Learning Difficulties in Children with TS		2.00	
AV-2	Inservice Video for Educators: A Regular Kid, That's Me		30.00	
AV-6	TS: The Parent's Perspective– Diplomacy in Action		20.00	
			U.S. Postage & Handling	$ 3.50
			International Postage & Handling	10.00
			TOTAL	$

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Bayside, NY 11361-2820

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