

## 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 **Roger D. Freeman, M.D.**, Director, Neuropsychiatry Clinic, British Columbia Children's Hospital, Vancouver, B.C. Canada.

**Q** I suffer from a sensitivity to touch, such as handling certain textures, or a newspaper. Is this a common symptom? Are there studies about this sensitivity?

**A** This is a difficult subject, because such individual peculiarities are not easy to measure. More common than what you describe are unusual sensitivities to rough or new belts or elastics, and seams in socks. We have looked at the frequency of such sensitivities in our clinical population of children and adolescents with TS, as well as OCD and other disorders. It does appear that what we term "tactile" hypersensitivities are common in people with TS, especially during childhood, (about 35%). Whereas other sensitivities, such as to certain sounds, smells, etc. are more common amongst children with different disorders. One of the diffi-

culties in studying such patterns is that they are fairly common in the general population as well.

**Q** My 13-year-old son has TS and Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). Are these two conditions related?

**A** We now know that TS is relatively common, and that most people with it are never diagnosed. IBS affects up to 15% of the general population so obviously the occurrence of both, as in your child, wouldn't be a surprise.

**Q** I have gained a lot of weight taking TS medications. Is there a medication for weight reduction that is safe?

**A** In brief, no. And some weight-reducing medications are truly dangerous. Several, but not all, of the anti-tic medications cause increased appetite and weight gain in some people. One approach would be trying other drugs and taking the lowest doses. Advice from a dietitian and an exercise plan may be of benefit. Newer medications will be on the market soon and they may have fewer side effects, but diet and exercise are always good advice.

## LEGAL COLUMN

### *Q & A on the ADA*

The TSA receives many phone calls with questions regarding how the people with TS are protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Here are a few of those questions. The answers to these and many other questions are contained in *ADA Information and Your Employment Rights as an Individual with a Disability* which is available in Braille, large print, audiotape and as a computer file on disk. To order, contact EEOC's Office of Equal Employment Opportunity at 202-663-4395 (voice), 202-663-4399 (TDD), or 1801 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20507.

**Q** Are people with TS protected under the ADA?

**A** Yes. If you have a disability and are qualified to do a job, the ADA protects you from discrimination on the basis of your disability. A disability is defined as a *physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity.*

**Q** What employment practices are covered?

**A** The ADA makes it unlawful to discriminate in all employment practices such as: recruitment, hiring, job assignment, pay, lay off, firing, training, promotions, benefits, leave and other employment related activities.

**Q** Is an employer required to select a qualified applicant with a disability over other applicants?

**A** No. The ADA does not require that an employer hire an applicant with a disability over other applicants only because the person has a disability.

**If You Are Moving . . .** or if you are receiving **duplicate copies** of this Newsletter—please let us know so that we can update our mailing list. To update we need both your old and new addresses.

## VICTORIES

### *V.P. and V.I.P.*

Vice President of her local 4-H Club, Sara Stutts has been inducted into the National Beta Club. The prestigious club selected her for both academic and leadership excellence. She is one of only six students in her seventh grade class of 275 to receive this honor. For fun, Sara enjoys basketball, fishing and swimming.



### *Triple Threat Athlete*

A catcher on his Little League baseball team, Joey Ricci was a key player with an important role in helping his teammates win the League Championship. In basketball he was named an All-Star. Twelve-year-old Joey is also a keen competitor in Pee Wee football.

