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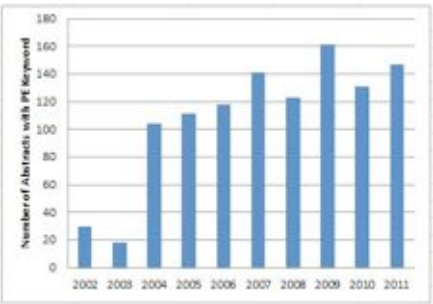
LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Celebrating Every Bit of Progress

I don't like to spend too much time looking backwards, but every bit of progress deserves to be celebrated. On Feb. 15, the American Heart Association released updated guidelines for women's heart disease and, after years of our advocating for recognizing the role of preeclampsia, it was finally included. Health care providers are encouraged to collect information about a woman's pregnancy history to better understand her risk of heart disease. We think more guidance is needed, but it's a great start!

Thanks to everybody who spent a few minutes registering their thoughts about our advocacy agenda in last month's survey. Creating a strong advocacy voice for preeclampsia in the halls of Congress and within the federal agencies is a multi-step process. Great strides were made in February toward achieving this goal, including the discovery that over 17 million dollars are being spent at the NIH on preeclampsia across nine Institutes.

I had the pleasure of spending several days in San Francisco last month for the Society for Maternal Fetal Medicine Annual Meeting where we announced our call for applications for the 2011 Vision Grants, including a new category for health services research. Please help us publicize the availability of this grant funding by sharing this link: http://bit.ly/fxRQJm



It's been fascinating to watch the evolution of the preeclampsia research presented at this annual meeting, including a fivefold increase in the shear volume of preeclampsia-related abstracts. Several of the researchers we funded presented their findings, such as Drs. You

MARCH 2011

In This Issue

Executive Director Letter
New AHA Guidelines
Vision Grant Announcement
Heard on the Hill
Research Roundup
Partcipate in A Study
Promise Walk Update
Volunteer Profile
Tips for Surviving Bedrest

Upcoming Activities

Communications Team Call
3/7/2011
Promise Walk Call
3/08/2011
Anthony's Memorial Softball Tournament
3/13/2011
SGI Annual Meeting
3/16-3/19/2011
3-on-3 Basketball Tournament
3/9/2011
Mandatory Promise Walk Call
4/12/2011
Last Promise Walk Call
4/26/2011

and Facco. Less noteworthy at this year's conference was the dearth of preeclampsia research presenting positive results; many of the oral presentations presented negative findings which are necessary but a bit disheartening. It's also been validating to meet more clinicians who know the Foundation and routinely use us and our materials as a resource for their patients. We consider these OB specialists partners in our mission and appreciate that the respect is increasingly mutual.

Since March is national women's history month (like we only need a month!), I leave you with this clarion call: "Never underestimate the power of mother's voices (and the families who love them) coming together to make a difference!"

Sincerely,

Eleni Tsigas
Executive Director

LINK TO CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

AHA Guidelines Recognizes Preeclampsia

In an unprecedented move, the American Heart Association updated its cardiovascular disease prevention guidelines for women last month to recognize preeclampsia and other pregnancy complications as risk factors for heart attack and stroke.

According to the AHA's press release: "[W]omen with a history of preeclampsia face double the risk of stroke, heart disease and dangerous clotting in veins during the five to 15 years after pregnancy. Essentially, having pregnancy complications can now be considered equivalent to having failed a stress test."

The updated guidelines are an exciting accomplishment for the Preeclampsia Foundation, which has long advocated for the recognition of preeclampsia as an important risk marker for cardiovascular disease. The Foundation joins a list of more than 20 professional and lay organizations who endorse the report.

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VISION GRANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Research Funding Available to Inspire New Hypotheses in Preeclampsia

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Contributors

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Laney Poye
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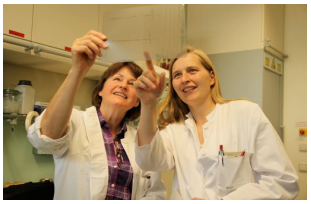

In addition to being a potentially devastating complication of pregnancy, preeclampsia continues to be a medical mystery to obstetrical research, making the field ripe for discovery. Since 2000, the Preeclampsia Foundation has been working to catalyze preeclampsia research by offering support to medical researchers through its Vision Grant program.

A decade after its inception - and $350,000 of investment - there are clear "ripple effects" of the program and numerous examples of its intention coming to fruition: small studies producing promising results and thereby leading to larger validating studies, investigators who have had their scientific imaginations captured by the preeclampsia conundrum and continue their focus in this area of study, and intriguing questions that have led to the pursuit of more answers.

This year's Vision Grant program is also inviting applications for its new Health Services Grant, a separate award focused specifically on health delivery strategies that can improve the care of women (and their babies) with hypertensive diseases of pregnancy.

Applications are now being accepted for both grant programs which will provide up to two medical research grants totaling up to $25,000 each and $25,000 for the separate Health Services Grant. All novel, well-considered research topics are encouraged. International applicants will be accepted, but applications must be in English. The application deadline is May 16, 2011, with awards announced August 12, 2011. Visit the Research Funding page for applications and instructions.

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HEARD ON THE HILL

Making Strides Toward National Awareness

Creating a strong advocacy voice for preeclampsia in the halls of Congress and within the federal agencies is a multi-step process. Great strides were made in February toward achieving this goal.

Early each calendar year, congressional offices allow organizations to submit to them spending requests and directive language in relation to federal programs that addresses the following fiscal spending year. The congressional offices then review the requests and set their priorities. The Foundation through its advocacy efforts and work with an outside government relations firm is working to cultivate strong relationships with federal lawmakers to advance preeclampsia research and programs. The Foundation's DC

representatives worked with Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard (Democrat-California), a champion on women's health issues and a representative with strong interest in preeclampsia research. At the Foundation's urging, the congresswoman has agreed to submit congressional language (called report language) on preeclampsia research. The language will be considered for inclusion as part of the Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations legislation under the National Institutes of Health appropriations section of the bill.

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RESEARCH ROUNDUP

Knowing When to Trust the Research

Many Community Forum members are very familiar with **Caryn Rogers**, who as a moderator and resident science expert, has helped many to understand the complexities of preeclampsia. This month, the Preeclampsia Foundation is excited to announce the launching of our Research Blog, a regular column written by Caryn in order to illustrate the current state of the research, put it into context, explain the statistics, and bring in principal investigators and volunteers with professional skills in this area to comment on their research and interests in the disease.

Her first article, previewed here, focuses on helping patients and survivors know when research has reasonable potential and scope and when, if ever, to trust general media coverage:

"When preeclampsia studies are reported in the news, there's rarely enough background to evaluate, from the news article alone, how important the research is, or how strong the findings are, or how likely they are to lead to some sort of improvement in care or treatment of preeclampsia. That's just a consequence of the way news reporting happens these days; preeclampsia is hard to explain, column inches are scarce, and science reporting divisions have largely been cut from media staff..."

Read More on "When to Trust the Research"

PARTICIPATE IN A STUDY

New England Study Participants Needed: Not Pregnant But Hope to Be Soon?

This study is recruiting women who are healthy, 18 to 40 years of age, have regular menstrual cycles, and are not using hormonal contraception. Eligible women need to have a history of preeclampsia, or a family history of the condition, and be thinking about becoming pregnant. Recruitment is restricted to the Northeast Region of the United States. Interested participants, please contact Carole McBride or by phone (802) 656-0309,

Study Coordinator, University of Vermont.

The newly redesigned Preeclampsia Foundation website features a variety of new content for preeclampsia patients and medical care providers. The Participate in a Study section allows approved researchers to recruit study participants directly through the Preeclampsia Foundation website.

PROMISE WALK UPDATES

Season Kicks-off with Record Fundraising

As many Promise Walk participants know, raising money early in the year can be quite difficult, particularly coming out of the post-holiday slump. Nevertheless, two Promise Walk for Preeclampsia volunteers did not let any excuse stop them from raising the highest funds for an individual and team. **Janel Kovarik**, the leader of the Chicago "Down with BP" team, raised $750 toward her personal goal of $1000, while **Samantha Reyes** and her team "Scuderia Reyes" of San Diego have raised an amazing $1,240 to date.

Janel Kovarik, Chicago

How did these two incredible volunteers do it? **Janel**, a two-time survivor of severe preeclampsia, explained that for her, it was all about networking with different circles of friends and telling people her story.

"Tell people your story. Tell them! Ignorance is bliss," Janel explained. Her advice to other teams? Incorporate a cathartic way of telling your story to your friends that emphasizes your personal connection to the condition and your desire to prevent more women from going through preeclampsia.

Samantha Reyes, San Diego

Samantha, a HELLP syndrome survivor and mother of twins, agreed with Janel, emphasizing the importance of supportive friends and family and the presence of her employer's corporate matching program to her fundraising success. "The ultimate goal is to find a cure. Every dollar makes a difference and brings us closer to ensuring that other families won't have to experience preeclampsia."

Read Janel and Samantha's Tips for Successful Fundraising

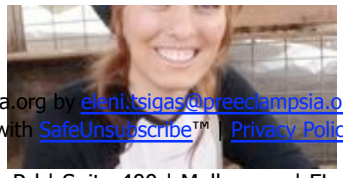
VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Jenette Zecena: Anthony's Softball Tournament Manager

Why do you volunteer for the Preeclampsia Foundation?

After losing my son, I knew I couldn't just sit around and wallow in my grief. Before I

Forward email
SafeUnsubscribe
This email was sent to eleni.tsigas@preeclampsia.org by eleni.tsigas@preeclampsia.org | Update Profile/Email Address | Instant removal with SafeUnsubscribe™ | Privacy Policy.
Preeclampsia Foundation | 1667 N. Wickham Rd | Suite 400 | Melbourne | FL | 32940



became involved in the Foundation, I was an observer. I would look online for all sorts of information on this disorder. I finally found the Preeclampsia Foundation and knew I came across something great. I was on the forums almost everyday looking for information. I finally decided I needed to step out and spread the word. This disorder is out there and people need to know about it. I don't want any other family going through what my family has endured.

Please tell us more about your upcoming Annual Softball Tournament. Why did you start it and how can others get involved?

I started the tournament in honor of my son. In 2010, I wanted to do something special for what would have been his 2nd birthday. My family are huge softball/baseball fans. I myself have been playing since I was seven years old. I decided having a softball tournament as a fundraiser would be the perfect "party." It was wonderful seeing all of those people joining not only in memory of my son, but also to help the Preeclampsia Foundation. I almost hit my goal last year, and have made my goal for 2011 -- $5,000 with at least 8-10 teams this year. The tournament is taking place in **Winchester, CA on March 13, 2011**. If anyone is interested in playing, starting a team, volunteering, or even just watching the games, they can email me directly or visit the Facebook page.

Read More about Jenette's Involvement with the Foundation

DEALING WITH PREECLAMPSIA

Five Tips for Surviving Bed Rest

You hear those two dreaded words from your healthcare provider's mouth: "bed rest." You may feel like you've just been sentenced to solitary confinement... or maybe it feels like a long-desired vacation from the grind of daily life. Whichever way you see it, the idea of spending days on end out of your normal routine can quickly turn frustrating and take a large emotional and psychological toll on you and your family. But fear not! Bed rest will not last forever, and your health care providers would not prescribe it if he or she did not feel it would be better for you and your unborn child.

Here are some survival tips:

Tip 1: Get your head on straight. Preeclampsia is particularly difficult to manage because you may not feel sick. Lying in bed when you feel fine seems contradictory, but what's going on inside your body is serious and requires you to follow your doctor's orders to the letter. Commit yourself to the process, then relax. Getting into the proper mental place and accepting your situation is vital to your success.

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