



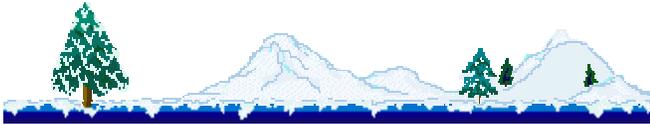
STUDY OF ARTHRITIS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Seasons Greetings!

Thank you so much for your continued participation. We were very pleased to meet many of you at the focus groups in Oxford County and East York. We look forward to speaking with each of you in the New Year, when we introduce our new questionnaires.

On behalf of my staff, please accept our best wishes for a happy holiday season and good health in the New Year.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gillian Anderson".



Patients taking Vioxx® encouraged to contact their doctor

We know that many of you have stopped taking **Vioxx®**, after the manufacturer, Merck & Co., Inc. voluntarily withdrew **Vioxx®** from the market in September. Research data demonstrated that the use of **Vioxx®** increased the risk of heart attack, stroke and developing blood clots. This is certainly of concern to those of you who have taken this particular medication to relieve the symptoms of your arthritis.

The Arthritis Society encourages patients who are currently taking **Vioxx®** to contact their doctor immediately to discuss

discontinuing use of this drug. Fortunately, there are other safe medications that are still available to you. If you have been taking **Vioxx®** or recently stopped taking it, please discuss possible alternative treatments with your doctor.

For those of you with **Vioxx®** left over, please do not flush the unused tablets down the toilet or sink. Return your unused **Vioxx®** to the pharmacy and you will be reimbursed. This will also ensure that the medication is disposed of safely. If you would like more information you can call Merck Frosst Canada at **1-800-567 2594** or go to www.merckfrosst.ca. You can also contact the Arthritis Society Information Line at **1-800-321-1433**.

We are interesting in learning how the removal of **Vioxx®** from the market has affected you. Some of you will be hearing from us early in the New Year to find out how the recall of this medication has affected your arthritis management.

Would you like to have a voice in how osteoarthritis research gets conducted in Canada?

Osteoarthritis (OA) is the most common type of arthritis, and among the top ten causes of disability worldwide. People with pain and fatigue from OA are too often told that these symptoms are a normal part of aging. This often leads to confusion among people with OA and their health care providers around how best to deal with these common symptoms. Building on the *Study of Arthritis in Your Community*, we've brought in additional health researchers to find out how

the common symptoms of pain, fatigue and reduced sleep quality impact your lives. We believe that the knowledge gained through this research will help with the development of new and improved treatment strategies (such as family support, coping strategies, the use of medications and exercise, among others) for people with osteoarthritis, their families and the community as a whole.

But.... we need your help! People living with arthritis offer valuable personal arthritis experience and knowledge; this experience and knowledge needs to be incorporated into our research. As a result, we are looking for people with osteoarthritis to take an active role in research decision-making by providing the consumer/patient perspective on research matters related to arthritis pain and fatigue and also guidance on how to communicate the results of our research to other people with osteoarthritis, health professional organizations, government and the public.

If you would like to be more involved as a consumer research participant, we would determine with you what time commitment would be reasonable. No prior experience or special training is needed! However, there will be mentoring available from other arthritis consumers experienced in this type of participation.

If you are interested in having your voice heard as part of the *Osteoarthritis Pain and Fatigue Research Program* or would like more information, please call Melissa French at the study office at 416-323-6218 or 1-877- 437-1591 (toll-free).

Sleep and Arthritis – Is there a connection?

We would like to introduce you to a new researcher that has joined our research team. Dr. Brian Murray is a neurologist who specializes in sleep medicine at Sunnybrook and Women's College Health Sciences Centre. He is interested in understanding sleep quality in people with many different medical conditions, including arthritis.



Dr. Brian Murray, Cayhee Cheung and Dana Jewell (right to left) in the Sleep Lab at Sunnybrook and Women's College Health Sciences Centre.

To gain a greater understanding of how sleep and arthritis are related, we are currently looking for volunteers with osteoarthritis, in the Toronto area, to participate in an assessment of their daytime fatigue and sleepiness.

If you choose to participate, you would be asked to come to the Sleep Lab at the Sunnybrook campus of Sunnybrook and Women's College Health Sciences Centre in Toronto. While at the Sleep Lab, we would do two assessments of your daytime sleepiness during the afternoon. In total, the assessments would take approximately 4 hours to complete.

During the first test, you would be asked to sit in a comfortable chair and try to stay awake for 40 minutes, while we watch your brain waves and eye movements with an EEG test. Your breathing, heart rate and body movements would also be assessed. None of the procedures used are painful or invasive. If you fell asleep during the test, we would simply wake you up when the test was over.

After completing this first assessment, you would be asked to fill out a short questionnaire. This questionnaire would ask you questions about your arthritis and your sleep. After you have completed the questionnaire, we would ask you to repeat the sleepiness assessment, outlined above.

We would provide you with lunch and light refreshments while you were at the Sleep Lab. We would also be happy to arrange your transportation to and from the Sleep Lab. This study is completely voluntary and will not affect your participation in the *Study of Arthritis in Your Community* or the health care you receive in any way

If you are interested in participating in this daytime sleep study or would like more information, please contact us at the study office at (Toll free) 1-877- 437-1591.

Winter safety tips for fall prevention

Now that winter is coming, please take extra care when walking about in the community. To reduce your risk of falls, please follow these tips:

Medications

Review your medications with your doctor every 6 months. Be sure to know the side effects of your medications and tell your doctor if any of your medications make you feel dizzy or lightheaded.

Use a cane or walker for mobility

Make sure your cane or walker is the right height for you. Standing with your arms relaxed at your sides, turn the cane upside down and put the handle on the floor. The tip of the cane should be at the level of your wrist. Always replace worn rubber tips on your cane and attach an ice pick in the winter.

The grip of your walker should also come up to wrist level. If necessary, adjust the walker to match your measurement. Most walkers are adjusted by pushing in buttons on each side and sliding the tubing to the new length until the buttons lock in place. If your walker doesn't feel right, ask your physician or physical therapist to check the fit.

Footwear

Shoes and boots should be firmly fastened. Velcro closing or cotton laces are a good choice. Laced shoes allow for a more conforming fit. Fabric or leather should surround the entire foot for adequate support. Shoes should contain enough space for the toes to lie flat and straight.

Shoes should have a non-skid sole with less than ½ " heel. For extra grip on icy surfaces, some people have found using ice grips (extra and deeper treads that you fasten to your shoes or boots) helpful. Note that slip-on shoes or slippers are DANGEROUS as they can easily cause you to trip!

Keeping in good physical condition

Moderate daily exercise will reduce your risk of falls and injuries. With increased exercise, you can increase your muscle strength, flexibility, balance and range of motion.

Health Card Number Thank you!

We would like to thank many of you for providing us with your health card numbers recently. By allowing us to link your questionnaire information with provincial health care information, we can evaluate the costs of living with arthritis both to you and the health care system. This is important because this kind of information helps drive the decisions health policy makers make! Using your personal health card number ensures that the information we are linking to you is actually your *own* information and not someone else's.

If you would prefer to send us your health card number by mail, please contact the study office using our toll-free number (1-877- 437-1591) - we will send you a form to complete.

TO REACH US:

Study of Arthritis In Your Community

Dr Gillian Hawker, Principal Investigator

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