

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.

My seven-year-old son has recently been diagnosed with Tourette Syndrome. His neurologist has prescribed 1 mg. of Klonopin a day. Has there been any research on the long term effects of this medication on children?

The long-term effects of clonazepam (Klonopin) on children are not fully known. That is not unusual because when a drug is approved, these truly long-term effects are rarely known. As is true for many medications we use for TS, Klonopin was approved for a different disorder, epilepsy, and not specifically for TS. This drug is also used for problems with anxiety, such as panic disorder.

Unfortunately, we do not have good controlled studies of clonazepam and its efficacy in treating TS. Klonopin is better known as an add-on medication for TS cases that do not respond to other medications. When the dosage is reduced, it must be done very slowly.

For more information about medications for TS, contact TSA and ask to purchase the publication, *A Consumer's Guide to TS Medications*. It costs \$3 plus postage and handling.

My grandson was recently diagnosed with TS. There is no history of TS on either side of our family. However, during the birthing process forceps were used. Could a difficult birth or a head injury cause TS?

There is no strong evidence that a head injury causes tics or TS. It is also important to realize that there are many types of

birth situations in which forceps are used, most of which do not cause brain damage, and therefore, would not be expected to increase the risk of tics.

My nine-year-old has been diagnosed with TS and coprolalia. I understand that her inappropriate language is a tic. However, sometimes it seems as though she says such words on purpose. How can we differentiate between the involuntary symptoms of TS and truly inappropriate speech? We want to be able to manage her behavior in a supportive way.

Coprolalia doesn't "sound like" the common use of foul language. These TS outbursts occur at odd times, and not necessarily when the speaker is angry or wants to emphasize a point—the way many teenagers use inappropriate speech. Coprolalia may be uttered under the breath, muttered with altered intonation, or be expressed only as a part of the word. This helps avoid embarrassment to the person with TS.

Confusion can occur when coprolalia co-exists with habitual use of unacceptable language. Children with TS will probably emulate their peers' use of foul words and might try to blame these expressions on TS—"My TS made me do it." TSA has a very helpful brochure on just this subject.

With the holidays approaching, my nine-year-old son's tics seem to worsen. Is there anything we can do to help him? Should we increase his medications?

In general, increasing medication in anticipation of a potential increase in symptoms is not a good idea. Tics can be expected to temporarily get worse with excitement or stress. Therefore, the pattern you describe is not surprising. It might help to find a way to provide specific times to relax and take breaks from intense or prolonged excitement.

Children are not very good at doing this for themselves and need guidance to determine when to take a time-out. Your son will probably learn this and become better able to manage stress as he gets older.

## New National TSA Board Members

Ramona Collins, M.Ed. of Oklahoma City, OK is a former national TSA board member. Ms. Collins, who has a BS in Learning Disabilities and an MA in Education, teaches children who are hospitalized due to emotional and/or severe neurological trauma. Her interest in TS dates back to the early 1980's.

Ms. Collins is the co-producer of two videos on child advocacy. She is also the publisher of a pamphlet on child discipline and the co-author of the TSA Teacher Training Manual (Educator's Curriculum). Ms. Collins is a member of the following TSA committees: Education, Planning, Nominating and Publications Review.

Kenneth D. Moelis of Beverly Hills, CA is a Wharton Business School graduate. Mr. Moelis is the Managing Director and Head of the Corporate Finance Department at Donaldson, Lufkin & Jenrette. He also serves as a board member for Web Capital Services, Levitz Furniture, The Center for Early Education and Cedars Sinai Hospital.

Mr. Moelis co-chaired the TSA West Coast Dinner 2000 and attended the Genetic Consortium meeting in La Jolla, CA. His interests include research, education, and fund raising. Mr. Moelis has a son with TS.

## Do You Know . . .

an elected official who has TS? If you do, please let us know at the national TSA office. Identifying these individuals will assist the work of our Government Relations Committee in the areas of Education, Health Care, etc. Please call Peggy Harford at 718-224-2999, extension 225 with any information you think may be of help.

## 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.

## The Brain Bank May Hold the Key to the Cure!

We Can Help Scientists  
Find The Cure

For information about registering for the Brain Bank, call national TSA at 718-224-2999 (East Coast Business Hours).

