

TSA TAKES THE AWARENESS MESSAGE TO CONGRESS

In March, TSA hosted the first annual Congressional Tourette Syndrome briefing. The meeting focused the attention of congressional members, and key staff, on the 1.5 million dollar appropriation that the Department of Health and Human Services budget had authorized for education and research into Tourette Syndrome (as part of the Children's Health Act of 2000) but has not yet been allocated. These funds hold the promise of terrific progress, and the representatives heard a persuasive case for releasing the money without further delay. TSA also addressed the need to re-authorize the IDEA and to include TS under the category of 'other health impaired' when children receive educational accommodations.

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above left: Jackie Baker and her mother Nancy from Virginia

above: Fred Cook, TSA Chairman welcoming members of Congress

left: Dr. Robert Pasternack, Assistant Secretary of Special Education talking to Jackson Kramer from Los Angeles, California.

STRESS AND TS

"Does stress make TS symptoms worse? The counter-question I always ask is: How could stress possibly NOT make the symptoms worse?"

— Professor Peter Hollenbeck, Associate Professor of Biological Sciences, Purdue University, IN

Can't Live Without It, But . . .

Everyone experiences stress, and a life without it would be very boring—no job promotions, no first days of school, no opening nights, no blind dates, no surprise parties and no tryouts for the team. For every negative source of stress there are many wonderful experiences that also cause stress. Ask any parent how they felt that first night at home with their baby and they'll tell you about the stress caused by fear of not knowing how to be a parent. Some stress can be avoided. If you really

don't like roller coasters, stay off them. But most stress is simply part of life and has to be managed so that it doesn't overwhelm positive experiences.

For individuals with TS, stress is particularly challenging. They often report experiencing both an increase in the quantity and severity of tic symptoms. It is not in their imaginations. It's real. Although why people tic and what causes movement disorders is still not entirely understood, researchers confirm the firsthand experiences of people with TS.

Samuel H. Zinner, M.D. is Assistant Professor of Pediatrics Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrician University of Washington School of Medicine Center on Human Development and Disability. According to Dr. Zinner, "The frequency and intensity of tic expression may be influenced by internal and environmental experiences. We do see that stress often exacerbates the expression of tics. While we do not understand why stress worsens tics, researchers have shown that people

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