

Epilepsy News

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Welcome to the new version of the Epilepsy News Ezine. We are hoping that by updating our look and technology we can better send you up-to-date information about epilepsy events, conferences, and issues that are important to you.



Please consult our website for further information: www.efnj.com.

Reminder! Purple Day is March 26!
Wear Purple to Support Epilepsy Awareness.

Our Administrative Office Has Moved!

Our new administrative address is:
1 AAA Drive, Hamilton, NJ 08691

North Jersey Office

322 Highway 46
Parsippany, NJ 07054
(973) 244-0850

Central Jersey Office

2516 Highway 35
Manasquan, NJ 08736
(800) 336-5843

South Jersey Office

216 Haddon Avenue
Westmont, NJ 08108
(856) 858-5900

Heads Up for Safety

35 Beaverson Blvd.
Building 11
Brick, NJ 08723
(888) 376-0376

Quick Links

Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey

The Family Resource Network

The Family Support Center of NJ

[Join our Mailing List!](#)

Local Residents Develop Exciting Ways to Raise Awareness and Funds for EFNJ



Caroline Magda, mother of a daughter with Epilepsy, has started an online jewelry business. The website launched in March 2009. There is an array of handcrafted jewelry. Ms. Magda has generously decided to donate 5% of her proceeds to the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey. In order to celebrate Purple Day, Ms. Magda's daughter will be designing purple jewelry. The total purchase price of that item will get donated to the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey. You can visit her website at <http://www.newhopebeading.etsy.com>.

Jessie Blum is a Celebrant and wedding officiant based out of Northern New Jersey. Ms. Blum specializes in creative and original wedding ceremonies. As a way of giving back to her community she had decided to donate 10% of her fees for each wedding to a local organization, as my wedding gift to the couple. She has chosen the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey as one of these organizations because her fiancé has epilepsy, more specifically absence seizures. Because of their experiences, she understands how much the support of the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey can help people with epilepsy and their families. For more information, visit Jessie's website at <http://www.eclectic-unions.com> or email her at jessie@eclectic-unions.com.

FDA Warns Zonegran May Cause Acid Imbalance

On February 23, 2009, the FDA warned that the antiseizure medication Zonegran (zonisamide) can cause metabolic acidosis in some patients. Metabolic acidosis is a disturbance in the body's acid-base balance that results in excessive acidity of the blood. The imbalance can cause breathing difficulties, irregular heart rhythms and fatigue. Chronic metabolic acidosis can cause long-term damage to the kidneys and bones and slow growth in children. The FDA recommends that health care professionals measure patient's serum bicarbonate levels before starting treatment with zonisamide and periodically during treatment, even in the absence of symptoms. The FDA said it will work with the makers of zonisamide to add new warning information labels to the drug.

Visit www.fda.gov for more information.



Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey Scholarship Program

The Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey is pleased to announce the existence of a scholarship program for New Jersey high school seniors who have epilepsy. We anticipate offering a least three \$1,000 scholarships.



New Jersey high school seniors with epilepsy who plan to attend a college or university are eligible. Academic achievement, participation in activities and financial need will be considered. The extent of a student's disability(s) will be taken into account as well, so that s/he need not be near the top of her/his class to qualify. Final awards will be made by the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey, which reserves the right not to make any awards.

Applications and supporting documents are due May 15, 2009. For an application [click here](#). Please call 800.336.5843 or email aracioppi@efnj.com for more information.

Study Indicates an Increased Risk of Epilepsy in Children and Young Adults Years after a Traumatic Brain Injury

Source: The Lancet Neurology

For more than 10 years after experiencing a traumatic brain injury, children and young adults have an increased risk of developing epilepsy. Therefore, there might be a window to prevent epilepsy occurring in these patients. These are the conclusions of an upcoming article in The Lancet, written by Dr Jakob Christensen, Department of Neurology, Aarhus University Hospital, Denmark, and colleagues.

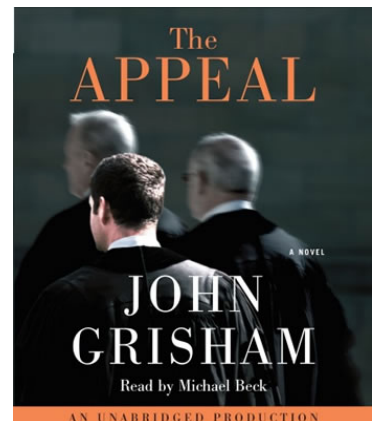
The authors identified around 1.6 million young people born in Denmark from 1977-2002 from the Civil Registration System. They then obtained information on traumatic brain injury and epilepsy from the National Hospital Register and estimated relative risks.

They found that risk of epilepsy more than doubled for mild brain injury or skull fracture, and was seven times more likely in patients with serious brain injury. Even over ten years after the injury, the risk persisted—those with mild brain injury had a one-and-a-half times higher risk of epilepsy, while skull fractures doubled the risk and severe brain injury increased the risk of epilepsy by four-and-a-half times. The risk was even more pronounced in people aged over 15 years—with mild injury, increasing risk of epilepsy by three-and-a-half times, and severe injury by more than 12 times. Women also had a slightly higher risk than men. Patients with a family history were at an even more pronounced risk (almost six times the risk for mild injury and 10 times for severe injury).

The authors conclude: "Traumatic brain injury is a significant risk indicator for epilepsy many years after the injury. Drug treatment after brain injury with the aim of preventing post-traumatic epilepsy has been discouraging, but our data suggest a long time interval for potential, preventive treatment of increased risk patients.

Epilepsy Foundation Takes Author John Grisham to Task

In John Grisham's newest book, "The Appeal," one of the characters administers incorrect seizure first aid by holding the person having the seizure down and putting a tongue depressor into his mouth. Both of these steps are incorrect and can lead to harming the person. The Epilepsy Foundation has recommended that when the book is reprinted in paperback there be an author's note indicating proper first aid for a seizure. As a writer who once stated that "Everything I'm thinking about writing now is about politics or social issues wrapped around a novel," let's hope that the request of Epilepsy Foundation is met. For more information, please [click here](#).



Court Broadly Applies Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments

On February 11, the U.S. Court of Appeals in Cincinnati, Ohio ruled that the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) applies retroactively to cases in which discrimination occurred before the actual effective date of the law, January 1, 2009. This decision is binding on lower federal courts in Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and Tennessee and will influence the decisions of other courts nationwide. Accordingly, individuals suffering discrimination before January 1 in employment, education and other areas based on epilepsy or other conditions may have their day in court and argue they are entitled to protection under the broader coverage provisions of the ADAAA.

The enactment of the ADAAA, on September 25, 2008, effectively overturned U.S. Supreme Court decisions ruling that people with conditions that are controlled with medication or other "mitigating" measures, including epilepsy, are not protected against discrimination in employment and other areas, because they are too functional to be considered disabled. As a result of these decisions, which date back to 1999, over 90 percent of cases in the lower courts alleging discrimination by people with epilepsy, diabetes and other "controllable" conditions have been dismissed, based solely on the conclusion that the individual was not disabled.

As amended by this law, the ADA expressly states that an individual with a physical or mental condition that impairs major life activities or affects major bodily functions (for instance, the neurological function) may be protected from discrimination, even if the condition is controlled with medication or assistive devices (e.g., a hearing aid). The law also clarifies that episodic conditions or those in remission are covered disabilities if they would substantially limit a major life activity when active. Under the ADAAA, the courts will likely find that virtually all people with epilepsy are entitled to protection against discrimination. For more information on the ADAAA, visit the Epilepsy Foundation [website](#).

The 3rd Annual National Walk for Epilepsy is Fast Approaching

Saturday, March 28, 2009, Washington, D.C.

The National Walk for Epilepsy will continue to bring attention to what epilepsy is and is not. As we walk together we will be sending a strong message to others across the nation that people with epilepsy are deserving of respect and are strong members of our community. Epilepsy deserves to be better understood!

If you are interested in joining our team you can go to www.walkforepilepsy.org and sign up under "Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey." Can't make it to the walk? You can still show your commitment by joining us for the Virtual Walk for Epilepsy. Donations can be sent via check to National Walk for Epilepsy, 8301 Professional Place, Landover, MD 20785. Please make sure to include Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey in the memo line of your check.

If you are attending the walk and would like to meet up at the starting line with other walkers from New Jersey, please call Andrea Racioppi at 800.336.5843.

Thank you for reading Epilepsy News! if you have any questions about the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey, please contact me at aracioppi@efnj.com.

Sincerely,

Andrea Racioppi
Associate Director
Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey

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