

# Newsletter

## to Health Professionals

Number 7

### ***Role of the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (P.M.R.) Consultation***

Recommendations according to the experts in spinocerebellar disorders by the medical and paramedical council of the AFAF, CSC, ASL associations

#### Edito

Although it is obvious that a neuro-genetic consultation is essential for diagnosing and assessing Friedrich's ataxia, hereditary spastic paraparesis and other neurological genetic disorders, the advantages of consulting a physiatrist (physician specialising in physical medicine and rehabilitation) are still largely unknown to patients and sometimes to their doctors. If the patient is to understand the advantages to be gained, it is important for the doctor making the referral to be able to explain the reasons behind the consultation, at least briefly.

*Dominique Mazevet, Spasticity Consultation, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Department, Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital, Paris.*

## *Questions and answers ...*



### **What can be expected of a physiatrist and what does a typical consultation consist of?**

At the first PMR consultation, the patient undergoes an often lengthy cross-examination.

The questions asked rarely concern the neurological diagnosis (which sometimes comes as a surprise to the patient), but focus on the patient's complaints, genes, lifestyle, family circle, home and its accessibility, profession, where applicable and the circumstances under which the symptoms appear.

The physiatrist then examines the patient, not only from a neurological point of view, but also in relation to the joints, spinal column, skin and so on.



## Depending on the results of the examination, the physiatrist may propose the following:

- Targeted, detailed physical therapy, explaining the aims of the sessions to the patient and indicating the goals of the therapy to the physical therapist e.g. muscle stretching, spinal exercises, targeted muscular reinforcement
- Therapy by other rehabilitation practitioners
- The treatment of troublesome spasticity by the physiatrist or referral of the patient to a specialist in the field
- Recommendation and prescription of walking aids and other technical aids and orthopaedic appliances such as contracture boots
- Prescription of shoes with special features such as ankle support, low shoes, orthopaedic soles and special adaptations
- A stay in a rehabilitation centre when there is a special reason for doing so (for example, after foot surgery) or physical or other therapy or respite in another structure

The above suggestions are examples only and are not an exhaustive list of the fields in which physiatrists work.

The various proposals and prescriptions must obviously be adapted to the individual difficulties of each patient.

**In conclusion, the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation consultation is an important element in the treatment of patients with neurological genetic disorders. Its main aim is to limit the consequences of neurological disorders in everyday life and improve patient comfort**

### Written by the Medical and Paramedical Council of AFAF, ASL and CSC.

It is chaired by **Dr A. Dürr** (neurogenetician - Paris) and composed of **M. L. Babonneau** (psychologist - Paris), **Dr P. Charles** (neurologist - Paris), **Dr F. Cottrel** (rehabilitation physician - Paris), **Pr P. De Lonlay** (paediatrician specialising in metabolics - Paris), E. Delumeau (social worker - Paris), **M. Gargiulo** (psychologist - Paris), **Dr C. Goizet** (genetician - Bordeaux), **Th. Hergueta** (psychologist - Paris), **A. Herson** (psychologist - Paris), **Dr D. Mazevet** (rehabilitation physician - Paris), **Pr A. Munnich** (genetician - Paris), **MC. Nolen** (psychologist - Paris), **C. Pointon** (speech therapist - Paris), **Pr L. Vallée** (neuropaediatrician - Lille). **The contact details for health professionals are available on [www.crng.org](http://www.crng.org) and the websites of the different associations: [www.afaf.asso.fr](http://www.afaf.asso.fr) - <http://assoc.wanadoo.fr/asl.spastic> - [www.csc.asso.fr](http://www.csc.asso.fr).**

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