



Follow the Reader

Your letters are crucial in determining the direction of *Neurology Now*.

Since the first issue of *Neurology Now* in spring 2005, it has been my goal to stimulate dialogue between the magazine staff and our readers and to facilitate communication between neurologists and their patients. We strive to publish articles that are important to our readers, rather than providing what we think is important.

While we can only print a handful of the 65 letters we receive each month, we read each and every one and take your suggestions to heart. Your comments also help us understand when we need to be clearer in the information we provide and remind us how careful we have to be with the words we use.

For example, Dr. Richard Simmons, chief resident of neurology and child neurology at the State University of New York at Buffalo, took exception to a statement in a story we published in the Jan./Feb. 2009 issue. The story was about Greg Grunberg and his son Jake, who has epilepsy. Mr. Grunberg told us, "I encourage families to consult with a specialist in epilepsy and not just a pediatric neurologist." Dr. Simmons read this statement to mean "not *just* a pediatric neurologist," implying that pediatric neurologists are not trained to take care of children with epilepsy. I can understand how the statement could be interpreted this way and apologize for any offense, though I interpreted it to mean "not *solely* a pediatric neurologist." That is, sometimes for children whose epilepsy is difficult to control, it takes a specialist in addition to the child's pediatric neurologist to best treat the problem. Pediatric neurologists are highly trained and in great demand, and I hold people who choose to devote themselves to the care of children with neurological diseases in the highest regard. It disturbs me deeply to know that a story we published upset Dr. Simmons. I'm also grateful that he took the time to let us know, so we can address his concerns and make sure we're more careful in the future.

We also appreciate the many suggestions for topics to cover. We have gotten many requests for stories about peripheral neuropathy and have been trying to bring you the latest information about this condition as

it becomes available. We have also gotten requests for stories about a neurological symptom-complex called ataxia, which includes a wide-based and unsteady gait, balance problems, and shaking, especially when the person is reaching for something. Ataxia is usually caused by problems with the back part of the brain called the cerebellum. We are planning on doing a story about the

neurological diseases that can cause ataxia, and what can be done to treat them, so stay tuned.

A number of readers have written to us over the years about the high costs of health care and the impact this has had on receiving optimal treatment for neurological diseases. In response, we have tried to provide advice on managing the cost of care. The Jan./Feb. 2009 issue, for example, includes a story on the benefits of hiring a medical billing advocate to ensure that your medical bills are not higher than they should be.

One of my favorite ways of hearing from our readers is through our "Speak Up" department in each issue. Here, people tell us their stories—either through an essay, poem, song, photograph, or painting. These are always powerful and inspiring. They

provide me with hope and serve as a reminder of how courageous people can be when faced with significant health challenges.

So please, keep the letters, e-mails (to neurology-now@lwwny.com), and phone calls coming! We want to know how *Neurology Now* affects your lives. We want to know what you want to see more (and less) of. We need to know when we get something wrong so that we can correct it. Thanks for your readership and for sharing your stories with the rest of us.

My very best,

Robin L. Brey, M.D.
Editor-in-Chief



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