

The December 2011/January 2012 issue contained a great article on Michael J. Fox and his Parkinson's disease. The feature on dementia in the workplace was also excellent.

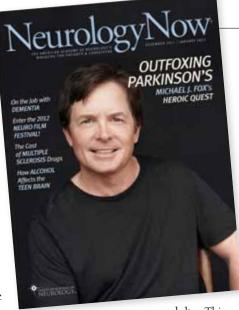
However, I have never seen an article on Lewy body disease, which has been described to me by my doctor as part Parkinson's disease and part dementia. We found out about Lewy body disease when my husband was diagnosed with it.

—Natalie Brecher Brookline, MA

THE EDITOR RESPONDS: Thank you for your letter, Natalie. We have published a few articles on Lewy body disease, such as "The 'Other' Dementias" (November/ December 2009) and "Ask the Experts" from November/December 2007. These articles are available free of charge (as they all are) on our Web site at **neurology-now.com**. In addition, we will definitely consider doing more coverage of Lewy body disease, thanks to your suggestion.

Teenage Brains on Alcohol

"Buzz Kill" by Amy Paturel (December 2011/January 2012), presented a very helpful summary of the effects of alcohol on the developing adolescent brain and why they are so much more severe than the effects



on adults. This

is information everyone should know, not only parents. However, the author makes one statement that implies supervised drinking with adults ("having a glass of wine at dinner with mom and dad") may help protect adolescents from harmful drinking. This runs counter to data collected over the past decade in several studies in the U.S. and abroad.

Most recently, Dr. McMorris and colleagues (*Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 2011) compared drinking behavior in adolescents in Washington State with that in Victoria, Australia, where a national policy supports supervised drinking with parents as a way to introduce teens to alcohol and foster moderate drinking.

The study authors found the opposite to be true: "Providing opportunities for drinking in supervised contexts did not inhibit alcohol use or harmful use in either state. These results, coupled with recent evidence from Dr. van der Vorst and colleagues (2010), lead us to suggest that policies should not encourage parents to

drink with their children nor provide opportunities to supervise their use. Even after adolescents begin to drink, adult supervision of alcohol use appears to exacerbate continued drinking and harms associated with drinking...Results from the current study provide consistent support for parents adopting a 'no-use' standard if they want to reduce harmful alcohol use among their adolescents."

Dr. van der Vorst, in the Netherlands, found that underage teens who were allowed to drink with their parents were far more likely than other teens to also drink with friends on the sly—and to drink more heavily. She concluded her article with this: "If parents want to reduce the risk that their child will become a heavy drinker or problem drinker in adolescence, they should try to postpone the age at which their child starts drinking."

While all the rest of Ms. Paturel's article supports these behavioral science results with recent neuroscience, that one statement perpetuates a myth.

—Dean Whitlock Mt. Ascutney Prevention Partnership Windsor, VT

THE EDITOR RESPONDS: Thank you, Dean. Our articles states, "Studies show that the earlier a person starts to drink in an unsupervised way (at a keg party with friends, for example, instead of having a glass of wine at dinner with mom and dad), the more likely he or she is to have alcohol abuse problems later in life." We did not intend to suggest that parents should allow their teenagers to have a glass of wine with dinner, and we appreciate your clarification.

Amy Paturel's article "Buzz Kill" was very interesting and valuable. I hope to send copies of it to my grandson and his friends at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

As a retired internist trained in both sleep and addiction medicine, I felt that

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mention of sleep impairment was missing from the discussion. Drugs of addiction, including alcohol, have a profound destructive impact on sleep quantity and quality, especially REM-stage sleep. Recovery from alcohol abuse requires an extended period of sleep repair and replacement, and even mild brain damage, such as minimal brain trauma, makes this repair more difficult. Sleep centers in the brain are deep and distributed near the emotional brain sites that you discussed. Much minor brain trauma occurs during "black-outs," without memory of such injury.

Until we meld sleep physiology into the picture of brain healing and recovery, the treatment road ahead in addiction medicine will continue to be difficult

—Edward S. Friedrichs, M. D. (retired) Brown Deer, WI

Caregiver Burnout

Some years ago I remember reading about "caregiver burnout" in your magazine. I believe I made a copy of the article, intending to prevent this from happening to me, and then forgot all about the advice given—until it happened to me.

My wife, Mary, had a stroke in March 2006. God spared her life. She is still doing very well, but it has been incredibly stressful. I have gone from about 184 pounds in 2009 to about 152 now due to the stress. In the process, I have had CT scans and a PET scan because the doctors thought cancer was somewhere in the mix.

By the grace of God, I am feeling okay, but I miss my pounds. At 6 foot, 4 inches tall, I did not know it was so hard to gain weight.

-William E. D'Aniou Fontana, CA

There's a Dog for That!

I enjoyed reading "There's a Dog for That" in "Speak Up" (December 2011/January 2012). Like Kathryn Crosby, I have Parkinson's disease (PD) and a dog, named Honey Bear. She has been trained to set my gait and to act as a counterbalance to help against falls.

The Parkinson's Association of San Diego has a great program, Paws for Parkinson's, that connects people with dogs that have been trained to work with PD patients. The association would be happy to share training advice and contact information of trainers.

My dog is very talented: not only does she help me walk, but she is also the "coauthor" of a book I wrote about life with PD called The World According to Honey Bear. Written for children, it is a tool for explaining what PD is. It is available on amazon. **com** or through the Parkinson's Association of San Diego. All proceeds go to the Parkinson's Association at pdasd.org.

Thank you for informing your readers about the benefits of having a dog for people with neurologic diseases.

> —Catherine Rodríguez, Ed.D. Parkinson's patient, advocate, and past president of the Parkinson's Association of San Diego San Diego, CA

Correction to Tourette Syndrome Listing

I was pleased to see in your December 2011/January 2012 issue that you included resources for Tourette syndrome in your Resource Central directory.

However, the correct Web address for the Tourette Syndrome Association is www.tsa-usa.org.

Thank you so much!

—Alisa Yaffa Board Member, Northern CA and Hawaii Chapter of the TSA

THE EDITOR RESPONDS: Thank you, Alisa. Please accept our apologies for the misprint!

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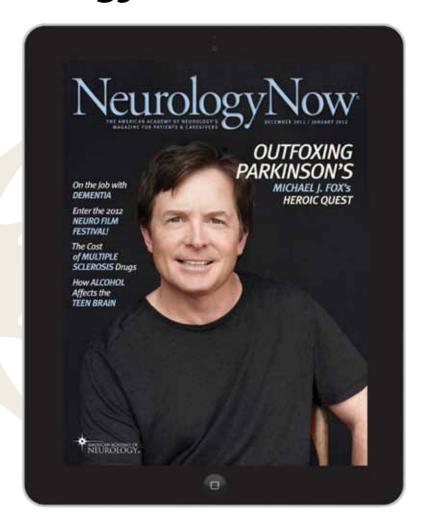
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