

July 2014

The Roseville Parkinson's Support Group's guest speaker for July was Dr. Stuart Isaacson. He is the Medical Director of the Parkinson's Research and Education Foundation in Boca Raton Florida. Dr. Isaacson is also an Associate Professor of Neurology at Florida International University's Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine in Miami. For over ten years the doctor and his associates have lead clinical research trials into improving PD symptoms and slowing the progression of the disease. These trials have been phase 2 and 3 FDA Regulated trials partnered with such agencies as The National Institute of Health, The Fox Foundation and a multitude of pharmaceutical companies.

Dr. Isaacson began his talk by reviewing what Parkinson's Disease is and how it affects you. He spoke of how people may have random symptoms such as vivid dreams, loss of smell and sleep disturbances five to twenty years before a PD diagnosis. In medicine a biomarker is a measurable indicator of the severity or presence of some disease state. Dr. Isaacson spoke about the work being done to make it easier to diagnose PD based on a biomarker. We know that many people have waited a long time to be accurately diagnosed.

In past years Parkinson's national and international seminars took place every few years. Now the meetings are held twice a year. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has had a reputation for taking too long to release drugs for use in the USA. Other country's standards are believed to be not so stringent so medications may be available for the market sooner. The lengthy time it can take for a drug started in a research lab to be available from your local pharmacy is due to there not being enough patients willing to participate in a clinical trial. It is necessary for there to be three hundred people to make up a clinical trial. The FDA is not responsible for this delay. Some of the new PD medicines in clinical trials now include a small "ribbon" of medicine that will supply you with Levodopa for twelve hours. Inhaled Levodopa is being studied as a way to get into your bloodstream faster. An infusion pump such as what diabetics use is also being studied. The non- motor symptoms of PD such as hypotension (low blood pressure) that can be so annoying may have a new drug to reach the market later this year.

Dr. Stuart Isaacson is the only physician that we have had as a guest to be so knowledgeable in regard to current clinical trials