



PLAE NEWSLETTER

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2004 Epilepsy Exemplar Awardees Named

Philippine League Against Epilepsy has recently announced this year's winners of the Epilepsy Exemplar Awards, a search for outstanding individuals with epilepsy who have and thus serve as role models to others. This year, six deserving achievers were selected among nominees. Awarding ceremonies will be held during the National Epilepsy Awareness Week, September 6, 2004, 6 pm at the Networld Hotel in Roxas Boulevard.

This year's winners for the Adult Category are Albert Apilado, Wilfredo Coloma, Rose Marie Espina and Baldwin Kho. For the Child Category, the awardees are Laurine Kwe and Michelle Carla Cunanan.

Members of the Board of Judges were Dr. Leonor Cabral-Lim, PLAE President; Dr. Marilyn Hebron-Ortiz, Chair, Epilepsy Council of the Philippine Neurological Association; and Dr. Lourdes Ledesma, Co-chair, PLAE Lay Subcommittee

Criteria for judging included good seizure control, ideal patient behavior in complying with medical treatments and positive attitudes towards epilepsy such as optimism, determination and independence

Patients joining the search were nominated in writing by their family, friends, teachers, classmates or co-workers.

(For a closer look at this year's Epilepsy Exemplar awardees, please turn to page 3.)



This year's Epilepsy Exemplar awardees are, clockwise : Albert Apilado, Wilfredo Coloma, Rose Marie Espina, Laurine Kwe, Baldwin Kho and Michelle Carla Cunanan.

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PLAE Newsletter Editors :
DR. HAZEL PARAGUA
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PLAE members attend Venice epilepsy course

By Elizabeth Palines, MD

The International School of Neurological Sciences in Venice, together with the International League Against Epilepsy, European Epilepsy Academy and the Venice International University conducted the Summer School for "Epilepsy in children: Neurobiological, clinical and therapeutic approach from July 11-22, 2004".

The University is just a 10 min. boat ride from Venice and occupies the island exclusively. In the middle ages the island housed a monastery and in the late 1800s to mid 1900s it was a mental hospital. Now, it is a haven for learning as the International School of Neurological Sciences is housed on this island.

Of 150 applicants, 40 were selected based on their curriculum vitae and field of interest. The group of students were composed of adult and pediatric neurologists, epileptologists, basic neuroscientists, training residents (mostly from Italy), and one molecular biology student. I was lucky to be accepted to join this group. The only other Filipina was Anna Berroya, who is finishing her training in Sydney before returning to the Philippines.

The lectures were exclusively conducted on the island, and the students and faculty were housed in dormitories adjacent to the lecture halls. The course fee was a modest 1000 euros which included course materials, three meals and coffee breaks as well as lodging. Students occupied airconditioned rooms, with its own TV and phone.

The faculty was impressive. No less than the president of the ILAE was the course organizer together with Dr. Solomon Moshe of New York. The course started with basic neural science topics utilizing animal models to explain epileptogenesis. Using rat models with accompanying video-EEG tracings various theories on how seizures are timed in the developing brain were put forward. And some of the mechanisms may explain why sometimes phenobarbital and phenytoin may not work in neonatal seizures.

There was a discussion on concepts of classifying seizures, the present classification systems and the proposed changes to the existing ones. There was a session on methodology of genetic studies in epilepsy as well as how to chart a pedigree for seizures. The second part of the course was mostly clinical including discussions on recognizing neonatal seizures whether pathologic or benign and appropriate treatment. Dr. Mizrahi presented his video on neonatal seizure classification. There were half day discussions on febrile seizures, status epilepticus, epilepsy surgery, etc. Extra night sessions were conducted exposing the students in organizing and editing a polygraphic (EEG recording) session. The students were then divided into 5 groups and were assigned to prepare a research proposal to be presented to the faculty. Our group was tasked to research on the

GABA mechanism in focal cortical dysplastic tissue in pediatric patients. Our tutors for our project were no less than Dr. Avanzini and Dr. Kapur. Just like masteral students defending a research proposal we accomplished the task with very few hitches.

There were also sessions on how to criticize a scientific paper dealing with topics on epilepsy.

All in all, the course was very helpful but very intensive and one has to really concentrate hard to assimilate all the information given. Although there were no textbooks or reading materials provided, the participants were given unlimited internet access (and paper to print out any article desired) and this was available 24 hours a day. There was very little time to explore the delights of Venice as the schedule was grueling. But I believe that the level of interaction between the participants and the tutors were the most important mechanisms by which learning was achieved- students were given to opportunity to ask questions, the faculty also asked each other questions or debate or belabor a point, and all in all, there really was a bilateral exchange of information. Almost everyone of the faculty was on first name basis.

As an anecdote, Dr. Deonna, who was lecturing on Laundau-Kleffner commented that a paper he read discussing BRECS was most probably LKS. He was pleasantly surprised to learn that the author was actually a participant in the summer course- Anna Berroya and Dr. Deonna had a half hour discussion on that case.

Finally there was a farewell dinner given and it was a relief to be able to dress up a bit! Champagne, wine, cheese, pasta dishes, canapés were served which was a welcome respite from cafeteria food. Everyone had a chance to take pictures with the tutors (as an attempt for posterity) and all formalities were dispensed with. And soon, we were all trooping to the airport to go home to our respective countries.

I sincerely hope that our pediatric neurologists can get the chance to attend a similar program like this as it is very enlightening and very educational. Living on an island where your sole responsibility is to listen, learn, and analyze is indeed an ivory tower existence, making one achieve a lot in 12 days.

As an aside, I placed in my application for this course that I was willing to share any knowledge to my colleagues. No, there won't be any "ECHO SESSIONS" from me. Well, the organizers promised to send each participant a CD of all the lectures as well as the video-EEG clips (I hope)... and I can make a copy for PLAE and CNSP.



(The author with ILAE president Prof. Giuliano Avanzini and other Venice course attendees)

Epilepsy Exemplar Awardees Role Models in Focus



ALBERT APILADO

Albert is a registered nurse currently working as a clinical instructor at the Western Visayas State University College of Nursing in Iloilo City. He holds a Master's of Arts in Teaching Degree major in Health Education. He is 32. Albert had his first seizure while in college. He said he went through denial, anger and depression but his being a nurse helped him cope with his illness. Now he thinks epilepsy actually served as the greatest challenge of his life. Albert says, "Had I not accepted that I am epileptic, for sure, my life until today would have been empty and with no proper direction." Albert also writes poems as a hobby. His neurologist is Dr. Elma Maranon. His best friend describes him as "...a friend who fought battles, and won them all."

WILFREDO COLOMA

Willie, 41, is a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from Quezon City. He devotes his time working as a Project Development Officer at the National Dairy Authority. Willie is married to Jenny Hermogenes and they have a two-year old baby, Wilbert. Willie had his first seizure in 1997. Since then, he had been under the care of Dr. Ceferino Rivera. Willie said, "At first I felt anxious, and afraid. After some time though, I began to accept my condition and encouraged myself to believe that there is life after epilepsy. With proper medication, epilepsy can be controlled." Doc Wille gets his inspiration from the fact that despite being an epileptic, he well provides for his family and continues to be a productive citizen of the country.

ROSE MARIE ESPINA

Rose Marie, 54, is the president of the Lay Support Group for Persons with Epilepsy and Caregivers of Iloilo. Bebot, as she is called by her friends, is a medical technologist and works as a Sanitation Inspector for the Department of Health. She went through a lot of difficult stages in her life including a failed marriage. In 1978 she was diagnosed to have epilepsy and initially

felt that it had "destroyed her life". In 1983 she met Dr. Elma Maranon who became not only her doctor but also her friend who "helped her face reality and assured her that life is worth living even with epilepsy." At present, Bebot devotes a lot of time doing volunteer work for their epilepsy support group.

BALDWIN KHO

Baldwin, 32, is a visual artist and web page developer who was born and raised in Manila. He is known as "Teacher Baldwin" by his young students in his art workshops at the Binondo Parish Church. Baldwin graduated from AMA Computer College with a degree in Computer System Design and Programming. He also had extensive training in music and visual arts and has mounted several solo art exhibits. He says he had been an epileptic half of his life but he never believed it was a disadvantage. He enjoys the fact that now he shares his talent to others and is even able to teach painting to children with epilepsy and autism. Baldwin is under the care of Dr. Fe Enrile-Bacsal.

MITCHELLE CARLA CUNANAN

"MM" was born in January 6, 1993. She is a consistent honor student at the St. Emiline Academy and has shown leadership abilities even as a young child. She is very meticulous, organized and is always in high spirits. MM dreams of becoming a doctor herself, a Pedia-Neurologist, like Dr. Madeline Sosa, her doctor and idol. She wants to treat and help epileptic children like her enjoy a good life.

LAURINE LYNN KWE

Laurie, 16, is a high school student from Jaro, Iloilo City. She has been in the honors list since kindergarten and has received various awards in mathematics, music and declamation. Laurie is presently in a special science class and is the editor of her school paper. She is under the care of Dr. Cynthia Demaisip.

The 3rd National Epilepsy Awareness Week Celebration at a Glance

September 6 – 12, 2004

- Laoag, Ilocos Norte
Lay Forum, Sept 19
- Vigan, Ilocos Sur
Lay Forum, Sept 12
- Nueva Vizcaya
Epilepsy Update for GPs, Sept 7
Badminton fest, Sept 8
Lay Education, Sept 8
- Nueva Ecija
Epilepsy Camp, Sept 10

- City of San Fernando
Epilepsy for GPs, Sept 10

- Pangasinan
Lay forum for BHW, Sept 2
RTD for GP's, Sept 7

- Tacloban City
Lecture for GP's, Sept 6 & 15
Picnic with PWE, Sept 11

- Iloilo city: Lay forum for BHW, Sept 5
- Bacolod city : Art contest, Sept 6
RTD, Sept 6
Free clinic, Sept 9

- Zamboanga City
Free clinic & Lay forum, Sept 6
Epilepsy symposium, Sept 9

- "Rights of Persons with Epilepsy" Symposium, Sept. 6
- Epilepsy Exemplar Awards Night, Sept. 6
- "The Stigma of Epilepsy" Health Forum, Sept. 7
- Epilepsy Dinner Symposium & BRIDGES launching, Sept 8
- "Isang Hakbang Para sa Epilepsy" Walkatahon, Sept. 12
- Lay Fora: Metropolitan Hospital, Chinese General Hospital, Makati Medical Center, UP-PGH, St. Luke's Medical Center, Phil. Children's Medical Center, FEU-NRMF, UERMMC, UST, Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center, Manila Science HS

- Lucena City : Mall tour, Sept 5
- Cavite : Opening of Health Info Center, Sept 6
RTD, Sept 6 & 9
Ribbon-cutting of BRIDGES clinic, Sept 7
Lay Forum, Sept 7
- Laguna : RTD for GPs Sept 7
- Batangas City : Lay Forum & RTD : Sept 15

- Negros Oriental : Sportsfest for Persons with Epilepsy, Sept 4
- Cebu City: Lay Forum for teachers, Sept 5 & 8
Epilepsy Forum, Sept 7
BRIDGES launching, Sept 9
Lay forum for ESCG & Outing, Sept 12
- Dumaguete: Lect on Pedia Epilepsies, Sept 11

- Oroquieta City :
Motorcade & Lay Forum, Sept 1
RTD for MHO's, Sept 3
- Dipolog City
Epilepsy First Aid Lecture, Sept 11
- Cagayan de Oro City :
Seizure Clinic & Lay Forum, Sept 6
RTD, Sept 7

