

The Estonian Parkinson's Disease Society

Year 2001 has been an active period for Estonian Parkinson's Disease Society, full of events for both regional groups in Tallinn and Tartu. We are happy that new members - Parkinson's patients and their carers - have joined Parkinson's Disease Society and enjoyed events organized for them, and also participated themselves in organizing of meetings and entertainment. Three new local groups are in creative period just now – in Kohtla-Järve (North-East Estonia), Võru (South Estonia) and Rapla (near capital Tallinn).

Several local meetings were carried out in both local groups with lectures and entertainment. The presentations were on the new treatment availabilities for PD; the cardiovascular diseases in older age; the rights of patients and new social support possibilities. Every month there are coffee-mornings for talking with friends not only about PD but also everyday activities, hobbies and families. The travels in culturally interesting placements in Estonia was organized. At the end of the year we celebrated Christmas together.

The special physiotherapy groups have continued in both centres – Tallinn and Tartu. The members of the society have access to the specialized doctors, nurses and speech therapists.

In April 2001 the traditional Parkinson's Disease Day Conference has been held in Tartu. That is an open event for all people who are interested in problems of PD: patients, their carers and professionals. The conference has been reflected in daily news. Professor Ain-Elmar Kaasik presented the historical review about the treatment of PD. Ass.prof. Pille Taba gave the lecture about team management of PD. As the 5th anniversary of Tartu Parkinson's Disease Society was celebrated with this conference, the leader of TPDS Karmen Ilus and the founder of the society Vello Kiilaspää made the presentation about TPDS history. The conference was followed by the concert of Tartu Academic Men's Choir and the festive dinner.

There was traditional 3-day rehabilitation and educational summer-meeting in nice Karaski Social Rehabilitation Centre in South Estonia. The lectures were performed on topics conneted with PD (treatment, bladder disorders, diet) as also the topics on general health problems eg using of medicinal teas on pain and gastrointestinal disorders. The program included also rehabilitation and social events. The participants enjoyed wonderful nature and company.

At the end of the year the winter rehabilitation and educational days have been organised in Tallinn. The presentations were about physical therapy, social management in PD, osteoporosis and rheumatological diseases, internet and homepage of PD. Lectures followed by social events and entertainment. That was possible to join in different rehabilitation groups on physiotherapy, water-physiotherapy and occupational therapy.

The availabilities for getting information about PD have improved. During 2001 the internet homepage about Parkinson's disease has been prepared in Estonian (www.parkinson.ee). That includes information about the pathophysiology and symptoms of the disease, management and social support availabilities, research projects in this field in Tartu University and literature, treatment guidelines, and PDSociety contacts. The courses were performed in both local groups to give elementary knowledge and skills for using computers. Two numbers of magazine for the members of PD Society have been published.

Three members of our PD Society took part in Euroyapmeet in Heathrow. Mr. Eero Kaalep participated in EPDA General Assembly as representative of Estonia. The relationships with EPDA and other national PD Societies have been close and informative. Several doctors having special interest on PD participated XIV International Conference of Parkinson's Disease in Helsinki.

Parkinson's Disease Society participated in several research projects during 2001. Tartu Parkinson's Disease Society in cooperation with the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery of Tartu University is a partner in EPDA project 'Information, health and social needs of older disabled people (Parkinson's disease) and their carers' (INFOPARK). Participation of Estonia in the other international EPDA project 'Quality of life, health & social needs of younger people with Parkinson's Disease' has been confirmed. Local Estonian research projects on epidemiology, quality of life and dynamic muscle strength in patients with PD have been continued.

The activities of Parkinson's Disease Society in Estonia have been supported by the Chamber of Disabled People and the pharmaceutical companies: Hoffmann-la-Roche, Orion, Ratiopharm, Merz, Gedeon Richter, Pharmacia&Upjohn, MSD, Lilly.

Year 2001 was time of strengthening and increasing for Estonian Parkinson's Society groups. We have traditional activities and daily work; the patients have the special institution where they can find support, get information about their disease and also have entertainment. Our representatives participate in EPDA events. We have regularly got information about EPDA news; EPDA Parkinson Magazine has been very informative and interesting, we have translated articles to Estonian language to make them understandable to all our members. Sincere thanks to EPDA for this great work for improving the quality of life of people with Parkinson's disease and carers.