



A Quarterly Newsletter from The National Association For Continence

From NAFC's Manager of Health Education

For those of you who have never called -800-BLADDER, let this be my introduction as the Manager of Health Education. My primary role is to respond to any and every call or request that comes into our hotline, mailbox, or via our Web site. It hasn't taken long for me to recognize the circumstances of NAFC's callers and to develop a very real compassion for those of you who are still seeking guidance and treatment. While I received my undergraduate degree in biology, I was no expert going into my current position in the treatment of bladder control problems, enlarged prostate, and other disorders. In order to answer questions, I consumed books and journal articles just as fast as I could. The wonderfully innovative world of medicine always keeps me on my toes.

In just the last three years, I have witnessed a remarkable number of new medications, therapies, and surgical techniques gain popularity and/or FDA approval in this field:

For overactive bladder (OAB), oral medications such as darifenacin (Enablex™), solifenacin (Vesicare™), and trospium chloride (Sanctura™) were growing in reputation when I joined NAFC in early 2006. In 2009, fesoterodine fumarate (Toviaz™) and oxybutynin chloride (Gelnique™) became available as oral and topical gel medications. If medication is not satisfactory, individuals with OAB can now access a treatment involving electrical stimulation called tibial nerve stimulation (Urgent™ PC).

With regard to stress urinary incontinence (SUI) in women, the transobturator (TOT) approach for performing sling procedures won praise because it is considered to lower the risk of urethral and bladder injury. Several novel mesh materials designed for TOT sling procedures in

women give surgeons quite a selection from which to choose.

A minimally invasive sling procedure using the TOT approach, AdVance™, was also introduced for men with mild to moderate leakage due to SUI. Men with an enlarged prostate now can opt for surgical treatments using lasers and radiofrequency energy to shrink the prostate, and Rapaflo™ is the newest addition to the line-up of medications that alleviate symptoms of urgency and frequency due to an enlarged prostate.

And this only scratches the surface of the innovation I've personally observed! We are constantly experiencing findings of research about combining medications for added benefits, using off-label treatments for new applications, in addition to investigations of completely new pharmaceutical agents and devices. If so much has become available in only three years time, we all should feel hopeful, encouraged, and eager for the next three years of discovery.

My message in this issue devoted to innovation is about hope. If you've explored all of the available options for your condition and you are not satisfied, your cure may be just down the road. Opportunities for management are also evolving, with product improvements in catheters, pessaries, containment devices, and absorbents every year. Keep reading Quality Care™ to be sure you stay informed. Look for our Resource Guide™ or Discoveries™ as well. Our driving force at NAFC is to equip you with the knowledge and resources you need. ❖

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Rachel Levkowitz'.

Rachel Levkowitz
Manager – Health Educator & Member Services