



# MS Lunch Bunch Newsletter



Volume 1, Issue 3

December, 2007

## November Luncheon Sponsor

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## December Luncheon

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**Thurs, Dec 11 @ 11am**  
Manor House in Mason  
"Eat Well, Live Well"  
with Dr. Robert Reed &  
Rhonda Cortright, RMA

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## MS Research



MS research took center stage at the 23rd ECTRIMS Congress, October 10-14, 2007, in Prague. Results were presented from numerous clinical trials, indicating the potential within the MS pipeline. Key findings also were reported on the development of disease. [Read MS Society's Summary of the event](#)

Christopher

As 2007 draws to a close, I am reminded of all the blessings provided me, my family and my friends (including all of you). One of the biggest blessings in my life has been the opportunity to meet and grow closer to each of you through the MS Lunch Bunch. In January, we'll celebrate our 6th year together. Who could have known what an impact we would eventually make in the lives of a great many individuals as well as the MS Community at-large. We have learned and shared so much through our little get-togethers, and it's been such fun! As you all know, we could never have done it all without the financial support of our wonderful sponsors and your continued interest and contributions. The members are the lifeblood of this organization and your active participation in our events, our surveys, and our service activities is what makes us such a thriving, valuable organization. Have a wonderful, joyous holiday season.

SHARON ROLL  
MSLB Cincinnati Founder & Hostess

## Last Luncheon Recap

On November 11th, about 85 members of the Cincinnati Bunch got together at Montgomery Inn. The talk, sponsored by Medtronic, and given by Kris Goldfus, focused on the [Medtronic intrathecal baclofen pump](#). The pump delivers a smaller, but more consistent dose of baclofen directly into the spinal fluid as therapy for spasticity for those who have not gotten relief from, or have bad side effects from, oral baclofen. Kris talked a little about how baclofen works, but mostly about the intrathecal pump as a delivery system. The pump, which is a three-inch round, metal disc, implanted in the patient's abdomen, stores and releases a prescribed amount of baclofen, through a catheter, into the spine. Often, the intrathecal method works even for those who've failed oral therapy. Kris addressed who might be a good candidate and how to decide if this therapy might be right for you. Kris told us that a consult with a surgeon and a medication trial are required. She covered advantages and possible disadvantages of this method and had a member provide a testimonial. Questions and answers came next, and many were taken and handled nicely.



Your feedback tells us this was a great lunch. The ratings for this topic were the highest we've gotten yet. Nearly everyone ranked it good or great. You told us she clearly knew the topic and conveyed it well. Her range and depth were also tops. Although many of you said the talk was a little long, Kris did a really good job with questions and answers. 92% of you said the program improved your understanding of the therapy. The only areas you told us weren't covered well enough were cost, how long the system's been in use, and other options to this therapy. 20% tell us you're more likely to discuss this therapy with your doctor.

## Education Tip

## News & Journals Carefully...

...and with a healthy dose of skepticism. A recent publication in the [Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry](#) announced that "randomized controlled trials...have failed to identify association between interferon beta treatment and depression in MS." While th

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## Recent MS News

### Vitamin B3: A New Strategy?

Researchers have shown that a form of vitamin B3 is beneficial in mice with a disease similar to multiple sclerosis (MS). Although standard doses of the vitamin would not be potent enough for long-term treatment of MS, the findings could be a step toward developing effective drugs against the disease.

Zhigang He, Ph.D., a neuroscientist at Harvard Medical School and Children's Hospital in Boston, led a research team that tested the vitamin nicotinamide in mice with experimental autoimmune encephalomyelitis (EAE). Like MS, the mouse disease occurs when the body's own immune cells target the myelin coating around nerve cells and destroy the axons, wire-like sprouts that carry electrical impulses from one nerve cell to another. Dr. He and his team found that mice treated with daily nicotinamide injections had a slower, less severe course of EAE compared to untreated mice.

[Read the article](#)

be interesting and exciting news for members on any MS therapy, be cautious not to read too much into its findings.

This study, while carefully conducted by prominent researchers, and published in a well respected journal, was not properly set-up to specifically test whether depression happens more often with any particular therapy. It was merely a survey of what's called "longitudinal data." In this type of study, medical records are reviewed, and assumptions are drawn based on analysis of diagnosis and prescription trends. Here, the number of prescriptions filled for antidepressant medicines was used to approximate the number of people diagnosed with depression and compared to the number of people treated with primary MS therapies. The study showed about 40% of those on MS therapy were also treated with antidepressants, but found no difference in numbers treated between the different MS therapies.

While the authors state, "these results help to confirm that depression is not associated with interferon beta treatment in MS," readers should be advised this conclusion may not be fully supported by the data in the study. One reason: analyzing historical prescription data is not a sufficiently rigorous protocol to draw this type of conclusion. Another reason: the same author, earlier this year, published [another study](#) suggesting that one-third of antidepressant prescriptions are for reasons other than depression (like sleep and pain). So be careful not to jump to conclusions based on one study. Still, the study contains interesting findings that may be useful in a conversation with your doctor. For more information on how to critically evaluate the results of clinical trials, see this [fact sheet provided by the Family Caregivers Alliance](#).



Tons of raffle items donated for our 2007 Gift of Hope project. We raffle these gifts and use the money generated to help needy MS families during the holidays.

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