

News from the support groups on the visit of Dr Lapp.

Hamilton and District

Dr Lapp visit

Hamilton support group hosted a mid day meeting at which Dr Lapp gave an excellent presentation. The Vice president of ANZMES Frankie Letford stated, "This chance to have a world expert, and such a good speaker as well, has been a real bonus for the Hamilton support group."

ME/CFS Nelson Support Group

Dr Lapp meeting

On the evening of the 24th of November Nelson had one of the worst storms for a long time, but as it is said 'every cloud has a silver lining' and thank goodness the weather kept some people away because the venue at the Nelson City Church of Christ Hall holds about 70 people, but we counted about 170 -so it was a very tight squeeze with people overflowing into the foyer! Many of the people who attended were not on Nelson's 200 plus membership list **which highlights the extent of the illness which is often hidden in our communities.**

Dr Lapp's excellent presentation which lasted just over an hour followed by half an hour of questions included the medical approach, explaining the reason why many people suffer from dizziness; and covering possible drugs which he has found helpful in dealing with different symptoms.

He also gave excellent 'keys' to help patients gain better energy levels and improve their sense of wellbeing. One such key was the need to balance rest with activity. Dr Lapp stated that if a person with ME/CFS rests lying down, two or three times each day for between 10-30 minutes this simple 'key' alone can make a person feel a great deal better.

It is essential to lie in a flat position (with a pillow) and to clear the mind, which means not reading or watching TV, because the brain needs to rest too.

Dr Lapp said prayer or meditation is helpful in giving the brain the rest it needs.

During question time one member asked "whether there was a link between the chemicals and toxins in our environment and the incidence of ME."

Dr Lapp replied that about 70% of people with multiple chemical sensitivities

(MCS) also have ME/CFS and also, about 70% of people who suffer from ME/CFS also have MCS.

He cited the example of sheep herders in the UK who have a high incidence of ME/CFS which has been linked to the type of sheep dip they use. The comments from people as they left the meeting were extremely positive and the field worker's telephone has not stopped ringing since the meeting with people ordering copies of the DVD, not just for themselves, but to pass on to GPs, friends or family.

The day after the meeting was the regular Nelson Support Group meeting and the feedback from members was that they felt validated and greatly encouraged by his presentation.

One member said she had been suffering from some symptoms which she had not realised were part of ME until she heard Dr Lapp.

Others felt empowered by the information and strategies which were presented.

Mandy Baigent, one of Nelson's part time field workers said, 'It was a tremendous privilege to have Dr Lapp speak in our area at a meeting open to the public.

The huge crowd of people who braved the torrential rain to attend the meeting, showed how appreciative people were of the opportunity to be able to hear someone of Dr Lapp's calibre

Christchurch

Dr Lapp's Visit to Christchurch was held in the Community & Public Health Building Christchurch on Friday 28th November.

The meeting lasted approx one hour and because Dr Lapp had the rest of the afternoon free he suggested that he would like to meet the Christchurch ME Support Group members who were having a picnic.

All the members present were really excited and Dr Lapp joined in the picnic and answered any questions from the members.

For me the most interesting comment Dr Lapp made was that ME/CFS should be able to be diagnosed through a blood test in the very near future.

This should help all those professional medical people who think ME/CFS is all in the mind.

In addition it will also help with funding from Ministry of Health and other Government welfare agencies.

It was a memorable day for the Christchurch Support Group and our thanks to ANZMES.

When I took Dr Lapp back at his Hotel he said he really enjoyed the picnic and the beautiful hot sunny day at Christchurch.

Dave O'Hara Committee Member



Dr Lapp and Chris Baigent