WHO ARE WE?

The BC ATAXIA SOCIETY is a non-profit registered Charity

and Support Group

for those whose lives have been affected by Ataxia.

We meet regularly

in the

Lower Mainland

offering support and welcoming Speakers.

Please check our Blog

http://bcataxia.blogspot.com

or our website for current details.

www.bcataxia.org

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BRITISH COLUMBIA ATAXIA SOCIETY

MISSION STATEMENT:
To broaden awareness about Ataxia among the medical community and the general public; and to provide support for those whose lives have been affected by ataxia.

WHAT IS ATAXIA?

ATAXIA means clumsiness or lack of co-ordination. The term ataxia in itself is a symptom and not a specific diagnosis. Ataxia is also the name given to a group of degenerative, neurological disorders. This group of disorders is what is meant by the term 'Ataxia' in this brochure.

WHAT CAUSES ATAXIA?

Mostly, ataxia is caused by a loss of function in the cerebellum—a part of the brain which serves as the 'co-ordination' centre. It may also be caused by dysfunction of the pathways leading into and out of the cerebellum. Without these pathways working properly a person with impaired strength or sensation may experience clumsiness. Thus, a doctor may say this person has ataxia.
Ataxia is quite often an inherited condition. The age of onset and the rate of progression varies with the different types.

TYPES OF HEREDITARY ATAXIA

Recessive: There are several kinds of recessively inherited ataxias. The two most common are Friederich's Ataxia (FRDA or FA) and Ataxia Telangectasia (AT). FA is the most common form of ataxia and generally begins in adolescence. It may also occur later in life as a late-onset form. AT is more rare and generally begins in childhood. Both are recessively inherited meaning that BOTH parents must have the gene in order to pass the disorder on. In this case there is a 25% chance that a child will obtain 2 copies of the gene.

Dominant: The dominantly inherited ataxia's are commonly referred to as the Spinocerebellar Ataxia's (SCA's). These were previously referred to as Olivopontocerebellar Atrophy (OPCA). Generally, SCA refers to a form of autosomally dominant ataxia. In other words, it is inherited from ONE parent only. If a parent is affected , their children have a 50% chance of inheriting the gene, Ataxia usually develops in adulthood.

Sex-Linked Ataxia: A lesser known form, inherited via the sex chromosomes.

Mitochondrial Disorders: Genetic defects that affect mitochondrial function can cause ataxia.

SPORADIC ATAXIA

There are a variety of ataxia's that are NOT inherited. These include Multiple System Atrophy (MSA), Shy Drager Syndrome and Episodic Ataxia (with the exception of EA-1 and EA-2 which are often genetic.) These are generally brought on by a number of non-inherited conditions.

ATAXIA FACTS

ATAXIA means lack of co-ordination.

ATAXIA can be caused by a number of neurological conditions.

ATAXIA first appears with signs of stumbling or a 'drunken walk', lack of co-ordination and slurred speech. As it progresses over time, most will require the use of a wheelchair.

ATAXIA generally DOES NOT affect the intellectual ability of a person.

ATAXIA is commonly misdiagnosed as Multiple Sclerosis (MS).

ATAXIA with hereditary causes, can often be diagnosed with genetic testing if affected by one with identified genes.

CURRENTLY, THERE IS NO CURE FOR ATAXIA BUT PROGRESS CONTINUES TO BRING US HOPE!