

## 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  
Greater Vancouver area  
Offering Support and  
Ataxia related Speakers.

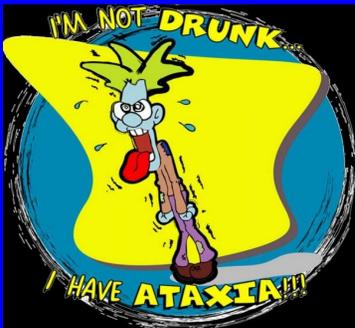
New members are always  
welcome.

For current Meetings and Events  
Please check our website.

[www.bcataxia.ca](http://www.bcataxia.ca)

Or visit us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/>



The BC Ataxia Society  
is proud to help support  
Ataxia Research at:

UBC Hospital  
2211 Westbrook Mall,  
Vancouver, BC.

Kwantlen Polytechnic  
University  
12666 72 Ave  
Surrey, BC

To donate to the  
BC Ataxia Society  
please donate thru  
Canada Helps with the  
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Canada Helps website  
[www.canadahelps.org](http://www.canadahelps.org)  
Or contact us for mailing  
information.

### CONTACT US

Email: [info@bcataxia.ca](mailto:info@bcataxia.ca)  
Web: [www.bcataxia.ca](http://www.bcataxia.ca)



### MISSION STATEMENT:

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

### BC ATAXIA SOCIETY

**HOPE IS PROGRESS ...  
PROGRESS IS HOPE**

[www.bcataxia.ca](http://www.bcataxia.ca)

## ATAXIA FACTS

ATAXIA means lack of coordination.

ATAXIA can be caused by a number of neurological conditions.

ATAXIA in itself is a symptom and not a diagnosis.

ATAXIA symptoms can be caused by multiple sclerosis, head injury, alcohol abuse, a stroke, cerebral palsy, a faulty gene or a tumor.

ATAXIA diagnosis first appears with signs of stumbling or a 'drunken walk', lack of coordination 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).

### WHAT IS ATAXIA?

The word "ataxia", comes from the Greek word, "ataxis" meaning "without order" or "incoordination". The word ataxia means without coordination. People with ataxia have problems with coordination because parts of the nervous system that control movement and balance are affected. Ataxia may affect the fingers, hands, arms, legs, body, speech, and eye movements. The word ataxia is often used to describe a symptom of incoordination which can be associated with infections, injuries, other diseases, or degenerative changes in the central nervous system. Ataxia is also used to denote a group of specific degenerative diseases of the nervous system called the hereditary and sporadic ataxia's.

### WHAT CAUSES ATAXIA?

Mostly, ataxia is caused by a loss of function in the cerebellum—the part of the brain which serves as the coordination 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. Ataxia is also caused by multiple sclerosis, head injury, alcohol abuse, a stroke, cerebral palsy, a faulty gene or a tumor.

### TYPES OF HEREDITARY ATAXIA

**Recessive:** There are several types of recessively inherited ataxias. The two most common are Friedreich's Ataxia (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 inherit 2 copies of the gene.

**Dominant:** The dominantly inherited ataxia's are commonly referred to as the Spinocerebellar Ataxia's (SCA's). 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, the 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.

### 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 EA1 and EA2 which are often genetic). These are generally brought on by a number of non-inherited conditions.