

Spinal Cord Tumour Forum Meeting,

18 October 2014

Notes to Accompany Presentation on Fatigue
By Angela Collett of the Brain & Spine Foundation

Slide 1 Introduction

Thanks for inviting me to attend and talk to the group. This isn't a medical lecture. Like everything in life we experience it as an individual and the effects on a person and on their families or loved ones, who has or had a spinal tumour is no different.

Slide 2 Bear

This is how some people perceive fatigue – sleepy, tired, can't be bothered, but this is far from the truth.

Only this week we received a flyer to advertise a professional seminar on the impact of fatigue on a neurological patient. The strap line was 'Considered common but relatively poorly understood'.

Slide 3 What is fatigue? What causes it?

Damage to the central nervous system – brain and/or spinal cord

Damage to the peripheral nerves – which cover the rest of the body

Slide 4 Fatigue and the Body

Shows how nerves, motor or sensory, work – dermatomes and myotomes, ie a person who has a tumour at T7 can experience problems both sensory and motor below this level.

Also long term effects from the tumour itself, surgery, radiosurgery, chemotherapy. All can contribute to fatigue.

Slide 5 Fatigue is an Uninvited Guest!

It can make you tired

Irritable

Increase your spasticity

Increase your pain

Can cause palpitations and breathing problems

Not only the physical signs but also the psychological can make people feel physically sick

Slide 6 Fatigue and the Psychological Impact

Identify the areas in yourself and learn how to manage them

Slide 7 Managing Fatigue

Save your energy! Plan your day, slow down, create your comfort zone, ie when resting make sure you have everything you need within easy reach so you don't expend any extra energy.

Ask for help.

Slide 8 Look after yourself

Slide 9 Fatigue – You and Your Family

Communication is a two way thing – don't assume they know

The illness doesn't only affect you, it affects the family, partners, friends and work colleagues.

Nearly everyday on the Brain & Spine Foundation Helpline we have people saying their loved ones don't understand about their fatigue, but often people don't take the time to explain how they are feeling.

Slide 10 – Any questions

'The strongest have their moments of fatigue'

Slide 11 – Brain & Spine Foundation contact details