

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LEARNING NEW SKILLS HELPS RESTORE MEMORY AFTER SEIZURES

Cognitive Retraining Therapy Helps Patient Regain Independence and Resume Quality of Life

FORT LAUDERDALE, FL (September 4, 2008) - Two weeks after Kara Moore delivered her second child, she suffered from a severe backache that traveled to her head. The pain was so intense that she was taken to the emergency room where she lost consciousness. When she woke up, she was unable to recognize anyone and had no memory of what had happened.

Moore suffered a seizure to the temporal lobe of her brain, which caused amnesia. This type of seizure, called complex partial seizure, is the most common type of seizure in adults with epilepsy. Moore had no prior history of epilepsy. After Moore gave birth to her second child, her hormonal levels were so unbalanced that they affected her brain cells which caused a seizure. The portion of Moore's brain that was affected by the seizure left her with a permanent brain impairment causing memory loss of her cognitive skills such as the ability to plan, solve problems, sequencing, and reading comprehension.

At first, Moore would not leave her home.

"I was so intimidated, overwhelmed, and embarrassed by my lack of memory," said Moore. "I could not remember scheduled doctor's appointments, telephone numbers, how to get to my friend's homes, or conversations I had."

Prior to her seizure, Moore had received an interior design degree but has been unable to practice because she does not remember the details of what she was taught.

"Many scientists once believed the brain became 'hard-wired' during childhood and that there was little one could do to improve its function once you entered adulthood," said Eduardo Locatelli MD, MPH, medical director of Florida Neuroscience Center in Fort Lauderdale. "Not anymore. We now understand that the brain retains its plasticity, which is the ability to rewire itself for better function, throughout life."

Dr. Locatelli says that by challenging the brain with new information, unused parts of the brain will continue to develop and have the ability to learn new skills. Upon Moore's thorough evaluation, including monitoring of her brain in the Epilepsy Monitoring Unit at Holy Cross Hospital, Dr. Locatelli determined that in addition to medication that would control her seizures, Moore could receive therapy through therapeutic techniques called cognitive retraining. This type of therapy would help her regain function in areas such as organization, attention, memory, and problem solving.

Cognitive Retraining

"Cognitive retraining is one aspect of cognitive rehabilitation we use to help restore skills after brain injury," said Teresa Biber, M.S.CCC-SLP. "Through the use of external memory systems such as a daily planner and other hands-on activities, we help train a patient to compensate for their deficit and regain the ability to relearn skills to function better and become more independent."

The area of Moore's brain most affected by her seizure was the area responsible for organizational skills. The overall purpose of the therapy is to decrease the everyday problems faced by individuals with cognitive difficulties, thus improving the quality of their lives. Cognitive retraining includes a considerable amount of repetitive practice that targets the skills of interest. In fact, repetition is essential for the newly retrained skills to become automatic.

"Eventually, another portion of the brain that shares the same wiring will naturally be recruited to compensate for the damaged portion. Through the repetition of re-learning skills, the new unused portion of her brain will make the new connection and allow Moore's memory to function better," said Dr. Locatelli.

"Moore has learned to implement a system that works for her," says Biber. "When she first came to me, she had little confidence and lived her life in fear because she was unable to recall the simple tasks we all take for granted such as, where we left our coat or remember a conversation we had with a friend. She felt stuck and ashamed."

Moore has learned to write things down, takes notes when she reads, and has developed a new approach to help her remember, function, and once again, enjoy her life. The progress that she has already made has helped restore her confidence and fuel her determination to continue with her recovery.

For more information, visit www.floridaneuroscience.com or call 954-414-9750.

##

About Florida Neuroscience Center

Located in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Florida Neuroscience Center is a state-of-the-art private medical practice specializing in the diagnosis and treatment of epilepsy and other neurological conditions such as headaches and Alzheimer's disease.

The Center's founder and medical director, Eduardo Locatelli, MD, MPH, holds triple boards in neurology, neurophysiology, and neuroimaging. He holds a master's of public health in addition to his medical doctorate degree. Dr. Locatelli has also earned certification as a Six Sigma champion. Dr. Locatelli is also the medical director of the epilepsy monitoring unit at Holy Cross Hospital.

Prior to opening Florida Neuroscience Center, Dr. Locatelli was the director of the epilepsy program at Cleveland Clinic Florida for seven years. He completed his internship, neurology residency, and fellowship at George Washington University. Additionally, he completed a fellowship at the prestigious National Institutes of Health. He is the co-author of Locatelli & Singh's Handbook of Neurology and many scientific papers.

For more information, visit www.floridaneuroscience.com.

Media Contacts

Christine Dardet, APR
954-753-5038 office
chris@dardetpr.com

Debbie Liebross
954-436-3644 office
dliebross@bellsouth.net