

COMMUNITY MEDICAL FOUNDATION FOR PATIENT SAFETY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Patient Safety Week 2007, March 4 – 10, Protect Your Hands

BELLAIRE — Community Medical Foundation for Patient Safety, a local nonprofit research and educational foundation for patient safety and healthcare quality, is observing Patient Safety Week 2007 by calling attention to a major source of medical errors—medical misdiagnosis. The Foundation is leading one area of improving diagnosis of carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS), a common repetitive stress injury that affects three percent of the general population and accounts for the 41% of all reported work-related repetitive motion disorders. Women account for 72% of all CTS cases. Work-related CTS and other musculo-skeletal injuries cost about \$40 billion (US) annually.

Using the SensoKinetoGramSM (SKG) System, designed by KaDa Research, Inc., and approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for the diagnosis and screening of CTS, the Foundation has been providing a screening test for CTS, based on measuring the individual's motor and sensory hand functionality. The rapid measurement is completely noninvasive, accurate, reliable, painless, and inexpensive. Hand functionality patterns are unique for CTS. Individuals with high probability of CTS are referred to an orthopedic specialist. The screening test is designed to provide early detection of injury related to CTS and to better monitor improvement in hand functions after treatment. Anyone who uses the computer, blackberry, or equipment and tools that cause excessive vibration and repetitive stress on the hand and wrist should be screened for CTS. Early detection can prevent further injury by modifying the workspace, replacing the tools or equipment, or limiting the duration of use.

Additionally, the Foundation is using the SKG System in a pilot study to identify a signature hand functionality pattern for fibromyalgia syndrome (FMS), which also afflicts predominantly women. Preliminary findings from this pilot study, based on a small sample of 14

FMS patients, show that four distinct hand functionality patterns have been identified uniquely for FMS. These FMS patterns emerged in the analysis after controlling for or removing patterns of other hand conditions, such as arthritis and CTS. More study participants, patients who are clinically diagnosed with FMS, are needed to increase the sample size and strengthen these findings. If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact the Foundation for more information. The results of this study may further our research and knowledge about improving the diagnosis and management of FMS.

The Foundation is creating the first registry for hand functionality that would serve as an electronic library to store and compare a large number of hand functionality patterns. This registry will be a major component of the Foundation's larger Patient Safety Registry and will be used by researchers and medical professionals to learn more about normal hand functions and those of diseased and injured hands, thereby improving the diagnosis of specific hand, upper extremity, and spinal-related conditions. Medical misdiagnosis of any disease or injury can lead to a delayed or inappropriate treatment. For example, misdiagnosis of CTS often leads to unnecessary surgical procedures. Delayed diagnosis of FMS prevents immediate management of the condition, decreases quality of care, and increases medical cost.

In observance of Patient Safety Week 2007, we urge everyone to protect their hands and get screened for CTS. Prevention is the best and most cost-effective strategy for any illness or injury, especially hand injury caused by repetitive stress. The Foundation offers Patient Safety Checklists for Prevention of CTS at Work and at Home. With the SKG System available, there is no reason not to take advantage of CTS screening and start protecting your hands right now! For more information about CTS screening test and the FMS study, contact Matthew Mireles at the Foundation.

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