



Yoon-Hee Cha, MD, Receives Early Career Distinguished Investigator Award



Yoon-Hee K. Cha, MD, has been named the recipient of the Early Career Distinguished Investigator Award from the [MdDS Balance Disorder Foundation](#) in acknowledgement of research activities regarding Mal de Debarquement Syndrome (MdDS). This award recognizes investigators at the beginning of their careers. Based on educational background, training, and quality of initial independent research productivity, these individuals are likely to make significant contributions to basic or clinical understanding of

the cause and/or treatment of MdDS.

Dr. Cha is a Clinical Instructor in the [Department of Neurology](#) at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) where she has recently completed her advanced clinical training in Neuro-Otology. She received a BS degree from Stanford University prior to her MD from the Mayo Medical School. Dr. Cha completed her medical internship at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and residency in Neurology at the University of California at San Francisco. While in training at UCLA, Dr. Cha initiated research studies on MdDS under the direction of Robert Baloh, MD, Professor of Neurology and the Program Director of Neuro-Otology. Results derived from these studies have recently been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Neurology*.

The [UCLA Department of Neurology](#) was founded by Augustus S. Rose, MD, in the 1950's in the UCLA School of Medicine and is a component of the [UCLA Center for the Health Sciences](#). The department includes over 100 faculty and 125 trainees and is associated with seven affiliated hospitals. This academic department is dedicated to understanding the human nervous system and to improving the lives of people with neurological diseases. Clinical research activities also include Alzheimer's disease, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, and neurorehabilitation.

MdDS is a rare balance disorder that most often develops following a cruise, other type of water travel, or motion experience. MdDS persists for months to years. Common symptoms include a persistent sensation of motion such as rocking, swaying, and/or bobbing. This sensation of motion is often associated with fatigue, difficulty maintaining balance, and difficulty concentrating (impaired cognitive function). Presently, no tests provide a definitive diagnosis of MdDS; diagnosis is primarily based on patient history and the elimination of other disorders that may have similar symptoms. There is no known cure for MdDS and the cause is unknown.

The [MdDS Balance Disorder Foundation](#) is an international non-profit organization dedicated to promoting awareness of MdDS as well as to encouraging research directed towards a better understanding of the dysfunction that underlies this disorder.

My husband and I usually cruise every three months. On November 5, 2006, we returned from a seven-day cruise and I started to notice that I was not able to stand still. I would have the feeling of falling over, was getting dizzy all the time, and needed to lean against the wall. In addition, I could not walk straight and I leaned towards the right but I felt wonderful while driving my car. On November 29 I had a very rare heart attack called Tako Tsubo, which can be brought on by extreme emotional stress. While in the hospital, I kept telling the doctors that I was still very dizzy. I feel that the heart attack was brought on by 10 hours of violent spinning and throwing up but the doctors told me my dizziness had nothing to do with the heart attack.

After I got out of the hospital, I saw three Ear, Nose and Throat doctors but none of them knew what was wrong with me even after I had every test imaginable. One doctor diagnosed me with Meniere's disease although I did not have any of the symptoms. Two of the doctors prescribed vestibular therapy, which I went through. Also, I went on a no salt diet but nothing helped. Next, I went to a neurologist who told me it was stress.

After that visit, I got on the internet and started searching for doctors doing research on dizziness. Although I live in Florida, I found a doctor in Philadelphia at the University of Pennsylvania to whom I wrote. He called me and offered to look over all my records but told me that if I really wanted to find out what was wrong with me I should try to contact a doctor at Emory University. I called this doctor immediately, telling him he was my last hope and that my husband was willing to take me anywhere since I did not want to live anymore if it meant feeling this way 24/7. After emailing him and sending him all my records along with a letter from my neurologist in Florida, he agreed to take my case.

Before going to see him in September, I went on another cruise to Europe. I felt great on the ship and plane but as soon as I put my feet on the ground, I was a mess. At every port I had to hold onto my husband with both hands; it was awful.

I do not like medication and I have never been on any, but during my visit to Atlanta the doctor diagnosed me with Mal de Debarquement Syndrome and suggested that I take a very low dose of clonazepam. I started on the medication on September 14 by taking .25 mg. of the pill in the morning. It seemed to change my life back to normal but in December, I tried to go off the drug by taking it every other day. On the days that I did not take it the MdDS returned. Therefore, I am back on the medication and it is helping my symptoms.

Arlene Kauffman



Please stop at booth 226B! Representatives of the **MdDS Balance Disorder Foundation** will be present at the **60th Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Neurology**. The meeting is located at the **McCormick Place West, 2301 South Lake Shore Drive, Chicago IL, April 12 through April 19, 2008**. Our representatives will be on hand to share information and data analysis about **Mal de Debarquement Monday, April 14, through Thursday, April 17, 2008**. They will share the results of the **Treatment and Therapies Survey**, and the **Medication Survey** that are available at www.mddsfoundation.org.

There is a direct link to the ABC Primetime Medical Mysteries show about Mal de Debarquement that aired January 23, 2007 available at: <http://abcnews.go.com/video/playerIndex?id=4180415>.

The Foundation is now able to accept donations through a non-profit **PayPal** account that allows direct and credit card donations. This is advantageous for those who give from both the US and internationally.

In addition, the MdDS Balance Disorder Foundation appears at **GuideStar**. This on-line repository for legitimate non-profit organizations allows those interested in donating to determine the mission and goals of the Foundation.

E-Bay sellers can now register with Mission Fish to donate a portion of their proceeds to the Foundation. In order to set up an account access



and designate the MdDS Balance Disorder Foundation as the non-profit to receive a set portion of the profits from sales.

Visit YouTube.com to view two videos about Mal de Debarquement.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfb7wXmw6QY>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pJ_UMuO17w

These videos have been viewed a combined 900 times since they were posted earlier this month. We hope to add more videos to our collection and would appreciate professional input in this endeavor.

Your Contributions Count!

Operating as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, your tax exempt donations to the MdDS Balance Disorder Foundation in support of research and educational and advocacy programs are encouraged.

We are now able to accept contributions using Pay Pal and credit cards.

Visit www.mddsfoundation.org to use the donate button.



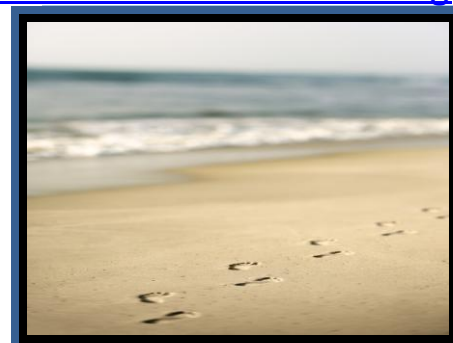
Or please send checks to:

MdDS Balance Disorder Foundation,
Marilyn Josselyn, Treasurer
255 Copper Beech Drive
Blue Bell, PA 19422

If you are interested in volunteering to assist with our programs, please email:

Sharon: lodilawyer@yahoo.com

For further information, please visit our website at www.mddsfoundation.org



Seeking answers one step at a time.

Send comments, questions, or suggestions to the [Newsletter Editor](#).