

My rough notes:

Once again, I really got a lot out of the meeting and left feeling lucky to be part of a supportive and knowledgeable group. We had about a dozen people. A number of topics were discussed including medicines, exercise, diet, good rheumatologists, emotional toll of AS, etc. I suggested two issues, 'what to tell a newly diagnosed person' & EMT training. After the meeting the issue of hand pain came up and someone said that elevating the hand, using a tight grip and ice helped them.

For the newly diagnosed issue, the concept of gathering your team was helpful. The team includes docs, people you can talk to about it (a family member, friend, support group), psychologist/psychiatrist, clergy, exercise person (pt, coach, yoga, etc), etc. it would be great if can get docs to talk with each other. Rheumatologist should be someone that has experience with SpA and someone you can relate well with.

EMTs can do a lot more harm than good if they don't know about SpA. We watched the EMT training DVD and people volunteered to distribute the DVD to their neighborhood fire station.

We once again used name tags and had a slightly more structured meeting. There is plenty of space available for people to share what's going on with them and ask the group questions.

Some links:

- Blood work and AS: article attached.
- Heart issues & AS: <http://www.spondylitis.org/members/52.aspx>
- Walk-a-thon: <http://www.spondylitis.org/press/news/602-walk-your-AS-off-round-three.aspx>
- The 5 TNFi approved for AS:
http://www.spondylitis.org/press/news/594_cimzia_approved_spondylitis.aspx
- EMT Training DVD
 - If you'd like to help distribute the DVD to first responders in your location, please contact us at info@spondylitis.org or download the distribution form: http://www.spondylitis.org/physician_resources/ems_form.pdf.
 - Several medical alert bracelets styles: <http://www.pinterest.com/richahoward/ankylosing-spondylitis/>
 - Article on this outreach campaign: <http://www.spondylitis.org/press/news/581-first-responders-and-as.aspx>

Thank you to everyone that brought refreshments – wonderful!

Please help - I am looking for a psychiatrist or psychologist to speak at a meeting.

Next meeting: Sunday, April 13th 2-4pm @ the SAA office.