

Observations on My Post Polio Syndrome Response to Therapy from Futures Unlimited John P. Reinecke 2009

I took 14 days of therapy under the supervision of Susan Snapp's clinic in Columbus, Mississippi starting March 26 through April 8, 2009 (14 consecutive six hour days). My impression of the results are as follows:

- While undergoing therapy, I was not allowed to do anything myself in the way of exercise. All things such as four or more different types of massages, water treatment and rest periods were done on me or to me. I was allowed to help the therapists get me in and out of the water bath, waterbed and massage table and I was allowed to walk from one location to another, but that was about the extent of my exercise. Undergoing this treatment seemed restful to me, but upon returning home each day I felt tired and rested easily two or three times before bedtime.
- Upon starting treatment, it took quite a bit of effort on my part to get into or onto and out of the massage table, water therapy tank and waterbed. As time progressed, I was able to transfer myself from one situation to the other with less and less help. Some of this was due to familiarity of the obstacles I was confronting. However, I sincerely believe that a general gain in body strength made the movements much easier toward the end of my 14 day session.
- My back, which tended to curve to the right (caused by walking stress -- not scoliosis), assumed a vertical stature about halfway through the therapy. I was able to stand straight and felt taller than before treatment. The feel of a straight back was quite pleasing and I started anticipating other things/capabilities that might develop or increase. My erect posture is still present on May 10. This helps my walking gait with and without a walking stick.
- Most peculiar to me was the apparent gaining of muscle mass without exercise. Many people suffering from postpolio effects noted an extreme lack of gluteus maximus bulk. It's stressful because one is forced to sit on one's bony pelvis with very little padding from glutes or fat. The staff noted that I had acquired greater bulk for my rump (and other muscle groups). I thought the staff was just trying to raise my spirits but when I asked my wife if she thought so too, she confirmed that I indeed appeared to have larger buttocks. I was told by the Futures Unlimited staff working on me that other muscles had increased mass as well.
- My left forearm, with the exception of two wrist extensor's was completely paralyzed July 1952 when I contracted polio and the situation has not changed. My experience with muscles that have been lost or are barely working have not been brought back to a useful strength. I still have a dropfoot which requires a leaf splint that fits in my shoe and straps on to my upper calf to aid my walking. However, the hardly movable muscles that work my toes on my left foot (mostly downward) have been noticeably strengthened. I find this remarkable even though they don't appear to aid

my walking.

- My right arm was somewhat weakened by polio but, effectively, is fully operational. I believe this arm has increased its overall strength. I will soon find if it has by comparing it against the record of my right hand strength made about a year earlier at a licensed physical therapy clinic.
- I have recently lost more function in my right shoulder which made reaching for high objects painful and more difficult. Toward the end of Snapp's therapy, and still continuing, is an increase in flexibility and strength of my right shoulder. I can reach higher objects than before the therapy (this seems to be a common comment of polio victims in response to this therapy). The pain in my shoulder has been reduced but not eliminated.
- Walking without my cane has markedly improved. My steps are longer and my body displacement to the right is far less. I don't anticipate improving enough to give up the cane. My caneless walking still looks bad and stresses my body despite the improvement. Previously, my steps have been shorter and my spine noticeably curved to the right. I looked bad and felt bad walking this way. Walking with a cane was much better than without. However, I still walked poorly and looked pathetic enough to have men and women open doors for me. My walking capability was decaying and I thought I'd be lucky to stay out of a motorized wheelchair for two or three more years. My progress in ambulation alone makes the Snapp experience very worthwhile.
- The following is a later observation made April 29, 2009. My walking has continued to improve since the Snapp therapy. My stride is longer both with and without a cane. Further, I frequently forget using a cane when walking short distances. Prior to therapy I used a cane about 98% of the time. I currently feel that I may be wheelchair-free for three or more years and fantasize, with periodic therapy, to walk five or more years. This is a primary goal and one I now believe can be attained.
- I have acquired a sense of well-being and I attribute to the therapy. Beforehand, I felt decrepit and was told that I looked old and quite handicapped. I may have induced this appearance because of what I felt was happening to me via the postpolio syndrome phenomena. Every 2 to 4 weeks I knew I was losing more ground. Now, my appearance has changed for the better and my friends and acquaintances have commented on how well I look. These were unsolicited comments and, I believe, genuine. I do look a lot better!
- Dressing was laborious. Putting on socks was very difficult and I had fashioned an implement to help me do this (I only wear long black socks which aids the wearing of my leaf splint). Much of my difficulty is caused by the fused lower lumbar part of my spine due to earlier spinal disc scrapings and spinal fusion surgery of my lower lumbar region. Since this is not a neuronal disorder the Snapp therapy was unable to help directly. However, the improvement I was experiencing has indirectly help me dress with much less time and stress. My quadriceps help me pick things up by allowing me to squat for a longer period of time than before the

Snapp therapy.

- May 5, 2009: my walking for short distances is now frequently done without the aid of a cane. Although my walking is still a bit lopsided to the right it is not as nearly as marked and the gait is longer (fewer steps to cover the same distance). The decision to walk without a walking stick is more frequent than not. My back is still straight but with a little less conviction this past week (or I'm getting so used to it I'm no longer so impressed). I am still quite impressed with the collective benefits I have experienced.
- Prior to therapy, I had a strength of 65 pounds capability on a hand strength measuring device. Three weeks after Snapp therapy the same testing device recorded 95 pounds. The registered physical therapist who administered both tests seemed quite impressed (I believe she used the word "astonishing"). It's regretful there are not many more such simple numerical measurements of responses to the Snapp therapy. Such measurements would be medically significant.
- I am a research biologist (retired) and I believe I'm not easily impressed. The transformation my body has undergone with the Snapp therapy is quite remarkable to me. I am not cured of my paralysis from polio but I have experienced a significant reversal of the postpolio syndrome affects I have experienced over the last two or three years.
- Today, May 11, 2009, Mississippi Public Radio aired a 15 minute discussion about postpolio syndrome. They did well in describing the devastation it causes for aging polio sufferers (it tends to occur 35 to 40 years after the onset of polio) but mentioned no cure or remedy offered by "modern medicine" or any other treatment. Ed Snapp, the creator of this Chronologically Controlled Developmental Therapy (CCDT) which aids several neuropathological problems such as cerebral palsy as well as polio, had difficulty dealing with the formal field of medicine. He relied on anecdotes, of which he had many, to describe the benefits of his therapy. This approach has little to no affect on medical science. His business was primarily composed of clients who had heard about his therapy from someone else outside the medical profession. My personal experience with CCDT makes me know that this is a great pity. Meanwhile, I hope my anecdotal comments are helpful to the reader.