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CTV OTTAWA

MS Walk raises thousands for research



The annual MS Walk in Ottawa attracted more than 1,000 people and raised \$340,000 for multiple sclerosis research, Sunday, April 25, 2010.

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About 1,700 people turned out for the annual MS Walk in Ottawa this weekend, raising \$340,000 for multiple sclerosis research.

Canada has one of the highest rates of MS in the world, and it's the most common neurological disease affecting young Canadians.

Participants walked along the Ottawa River Parkway Sunday to raise awareness about the disease, which can cause paralysis, numbness, extreme fatigue, vision problems and a loss of balance.

There are currently more than 1,200 people living with MS in the Ottawa-area, according to the MS Society. It's estimated there are 55,000 to 75,000 people living with MS across the country.

Money raised by the event will go towards research to find a cure for MS and determine the cause of the disease, as well as support local programs that help those living with MS.

New research encourages MS patients

New research by vascular surgeon Dr. Paolo Zamboni has recently started a movement among MS patients who are encouraged by results that suggest their symptoms may be linked to blocked veins in their necks.

"The mood is very upbeat because there's been a lot of research going on with Dr. Zamboni and his investigation. So, yeah. There's a great feeling of optimism I think," said Sandra Duff, who lives with MS and participated in Sunday's event, tracing the route in her wheelchair.

Zamboni's research suggests MS patients are more likely to suffer from narrowed jugular veins, which can lead to poor blood drainage from the brain. He believes the condition could also contribute to some of the symptoms of MS.

So far, experimental surgery using balloon angioplasty has been performed on a small number of patients, some of which have regained the ability to walk after surgery. Others say they no longer suffer from extreme fatigue.

The MS Society of Canada has put out a call for researchers to put together proposals to further investigate the possible relationship between multiple sclerosis and the condition, which Zamboni has dubbed chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency, or CCSVI.

The MS Society is expected to announce the recipients of that funding on June 14.

Meanwhile, participants in the walk still have another month to continue raising money for the walk, and organizers hope to surpass their goal of \$350,000. Last year's walk in Ottawa attracted 1,500 people and raised \$323,000.

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About 1,700 people participated in the annual MS Walk in Ottawa, Sunday, April 25, 2010.

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A scan displayed by Italian Dr. Paolo Zamboni shows a partially blocked vein in an MS patient.

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