



Support Group Leader Training – Lesson 1

Subject: What is Trigeminal Neuralgia

Trigeminal neuralgia (TN or tic douloureux) is a disorder of the fifth cranial (trigeminal) nerve that causes episodes of intense, stabbing, electric shock-like pain in the areas of the face where the branches of the nerve are distributed - lips, eyes, nose, scalp, forehead, upper jaw, and lower jaw.

The attacks of pain, generally last several seconds but may be repeated one after the other, throughout the day. The attacks may come and go and last for days, weeks, or months at a time, and then disappear for days, months or years.

TN is present in 100 to 200 people per 100,000 and new TN cases occur in 5 people per 100,000 each year.

- Pain is described as lancinating - (sharp)
- Pain comes and goes (intermittent)
- Pain must be in the distribution of the trigeminal nerve.
- There is remission.
- A diagnostic tool is the response to Tegretol (Carbamazepine); or other antiepileptic medications.
- The pain is triggered.

Pain triggers may include:

- touch - rubbing the face, brushing your teeth, blowing your nose or shaving
- facial movement - chewing, talking, smiling
- temperature - drinking hot or cold liquids, cold breezes, washing with cold water
- Surgical procedures would not help TNP, TDP, STN, PHN, and AFP.

Please complete the Knowledge Test – What Is Trigeminal Neuralgia Quiz 1 - before moving to the next training file