WHEN DISABILITY MEETS ALZHEIMER’S

UCI WILL STUDY THE LINK BETWEEN THE BRAIN DISEASE AND DOWN SYNDROME.

When Ruth Russi was born with Down syndrome in 1959, her parents were told she would die before her 30th birthday. But, as she aged, Ruth’s behavior changed. She would stare at her own vagina, unable to sit down or walk out of church still clutching a dollar bill for the offering.

Julie, 85, and June, 79, were devastated to learn that Alzheimer’s disease, a condition they worried about for years, had occurred to their daughter’s brain. Ruth died last fall, a week before her 56th birthday. John, 85, and June, 79, were devastated to learn that Alzheimer’s disease, a condition they worried about for years, had occurred to their daughter’s brain. Ruth died last fall, a week before her 56th birthday.

Incidence of Alzheimer’s

A 45-year-old adult with Down syndrome has a 25 percent risk of developing Alzheimer’s disease. At age 55, the risk is 50 percent; by age 65, the risk is 75 percent. In the general population, the risk of developing Alzheimer’s doubles every five years after age 65. By age 85, the risk is near 100 percent.

Most children will grow out of their picky phase, but for others, a physical issue like a weakness of mouth-muscles can be the cause, researchers say.

FRUMPY MIDDLE-AGED MOM

I’ll stop putting stuff off tomorrow

I’ve been thinking lately about things I hate to do, but I feel better once they’re done.

The subject crossed my mind because I just had my teeth cleaned, which I’d been dreading so much that I actually paneled my front door the day before so they’d have to knock instead of ringing the doorbell, I made up reasons why I didn’t make it to my appointment twice.

"Gee, there was an avalanche on Mount Everest, guess I’d better not go to the dentist today" sounded like a perfectly good excuse at the time. Though later it occurred to me that others might fight it long and hard.

Then there was the rare and unexpected urge to clean house that came over me shortly before the second appointment, making it impossible to go because I was covered with dust and dirt.

After church one Sunday, I finally did make it to my appointment, which was only as grueling and stressful as breaking down on the freeway during rush hour, felt smug and self-satisfied.

Then I realized that maybe it wasn’t just the dental urge to do things I wanted to avoid, but the biological urge to do things that need to be done.

So far, so good. But I also found myself sorting through things that can go to charity, and things that just need to be thrown away.

Sometimes I’ve seen one of those shows on TV where people bring in professionals to help clean up messes, and that sparks a primal urge in me to do it myself, before my neighbors make the call.

Also, I always wanted to have one of those houses that people just call and say they’re in the neighborhood and they’re stopping by, and instead of running around panic-stricken trying to get into shape to entertain them, I’m relaxed about it, feel the biological urge to start attacking it with garbage bags to sort out things that just need to be thrown away.

And while I was stumped about why I made up reasons for not cleaning my teeth, and the dentist today” sounded like a perfectly good excuse at the time. Though later it occurred to me that others might fight it long and hard.

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And while I was stumped about why I made up reasons for not cleaning my teeth, I kept running my tongue over my newly shiny teeth, and wondering why more people don’t get their teeth cleaned, all the time.

There came a house to stay in a beautifully cluttered house and ignore the mess.

At least once a decade, I said the biological urge to declutter my house, and start cleaning it with fervor, and that it’s always the right thing to do, and that’s just what I need to be done.

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RESEARCH: Alzheimer’s, Down syndrome link

Newport Beach resident Gerald Fobes will take part this summer aimed at identifying Down syndrome patients most at risk for developing dementia.

Alzheimer’s has entered the Down syndrome arena with a study to examine whether people with Down syndrome have the same type of brain changes that are present in Alzheimer’s disease.

“Because of the biology of Down syndrome, there’s a special window here to understand the process of early Alzheimer’s disease,” said Lott said.

VOLUNTEERING

Gerald Fobes, 41, of Newport Beach, plans to volunteer for Lott’s study after losing two children to Alzheimer’s. Fobes believes her son will be the same. The study is a healthy part of a child’s development and builds confidence in kids,” she said.

Is your child ready to be left home alone?

It’s about more than age. Here’s some advice for assessing maturity.

BY AMY REYNOLDS, 724-734-7450

Most parents with even a shred of common sense know that a 3-year-old is too young to be left home alone for any amount of time. But when the child turns 4 or 5, parents start to relax. But what about 11 or 12? Are those appropriate ages to leave a child home alone? California, like most states, does not have a law that says how old a child should be to leave home alone. That decision is left up to parents, on a case-by-case basis.

Leaving a child home alone isn’t as easy.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that a child under 12 be left in home unpopulated.

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