

NTBRMS NEWS

North Texas Burn Rehabilitation Model System

FALL 2013

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"I had to prove to myself ...making the best of my life that I could."

-Scott M. Garrett, burn survivor

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Forever Different: A True Story of A Burn Victim's Survival and Perseverance

By Scott M. Garrett
With comments from
Radha Holavanahalli, Ph.D.

Twenty five years ago, I was just 24 years old, a young man in the prime of his life, newly married, working two jobs, looking at a future full of possibilities. All of that changed in a single day, in a tragic on-the-job accident, a chemical fire that burned 41 percent of my body. I sustained second- and third-degree burns on my face, neck, arms, torso, back, and legs.

I was taken to Parkland Memorial Hospital. The amazing doctors and nurses there saved my life. It was there, at Parkland, in the burn unit on the sixth floor, that I started my long and painful road to recovery.

After one month at Parkland and after several skin graft surgeries, I was sent home. I had to continue my recovery on my own. This included one month of physical therapy at Aston Ambulatory Care Center, a full body Jobst stocking that I wore for a year, arm braces, a neck/face shield, and an extreme amount of determination to not let the burns adversely affect the rest of my life. I also had to undergo one more surgery a few years later on my hands because of the buildup of scar tissue from the burns. This surgery was performed by Dr. Rod Rohrich at UT Southwestern Zale Lipshy University Hospital.



After two years of intense recovery and rehabilitation, on my own, both physical and psychological, and with love and support from family and friends, I was able to return to the job where my accident occurred. I was also able to lift weights again and play golf. I had to prove to myself that I could do exactly what I was doing before I was burned. I wasn't going to lie down and give up. From that point forward I lived my life the way I wanted to, always moving forward and making the best of my life that I could. I have written a book chronicling my accident, my recovery, and my survival – my life after the accident. The book "Forever Different A True Story of a Burn Victim's Sur-

vival and Perseverance." And I have the honor of having the forward for my book written by Dr. Rohrich, Chairman of Plastic Surgery at UT Southwestern. My hope is that my story is able to inspire others to never give up. This book is available in hardback, paperback, and ebook and may be purchased from <http://amazon.com/> or <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/>.

Dr. Holavanahalli, Director of Research for the NTBRMS: Scott has "poured his heart, soul and tears into this book" and he hopes to reach out to other burn survivors by sharing his story. As Dr. Rohrich wrote, "Scott has not allowed the burn and his subsequent injury to succumb him, but to make him forever different but also, I think, forever better." Scott has since recovered from his burn injury and he is not a burn victim. He is a burn survivor and he attends the monthly Burn Survivors Support Group conducted by the Burn Model System at Parkland/UTSW with the hopes of giving back to the community of burn survivors who are in their process of recovery.

“We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has participated in our research efforts by providing feedback and data.”
- Dr. Karen Kowalske and the Research Staff

Research Efforts...

You cannot ditch the itch!! By Radha Holavanahalli, Ph.D.

Postburn itching is reported in over 90 percent of burn injury survivors at the time of hospital discharge. It is no wonder then the issue of itching comes up in almost every conversation with burn

injury survivors. It is also a complaint that is almost always discussed in the Burn Survivor Support Group meetings.

The Burn Model Systems have been collecting data from burn

survivors regarding various aspects of post-burn itching over time. The findings from a study¹ using this data was presented recently at the annual meeting of the American Burn Association:

- About 44 percent of the individuals who provided data for this study reported problems with itching
- Itching symptoms lasted for less than 6 hours in a day and were reported to be mild in intensity
- Itching affects many aspects of one’s life:
 - About 50 percent reported that it affected leisure/social activities;
 - About 47 percent reported that it affected housework;
 - About 51 percent reported that it affected work/school; and
 - About 56 percent reported that it affected sleep.

This study concluded that post-burn itch continues beyond the early recovery period and impacts the quality of life in a number of individuals as shown above. There is no treatment that will stop itching completely, but there are several that may help. In

order to help you understand your problem with itching and what you can do about it, the burn model systems have put together a Fact-sheet called “Itchy Skin After Burn Injury.”² This fact sheet provides useful information regarding some topical therapies (creams and lo-

tions, baths), oral medications, and other tips that may help you in finding some relief from itching. You may obtain a copy of this fact-sheet online at <http://www.msctc.org/burn/model-system-centers> or by contacting a burn team member at your burn center.

¹ Carrougher GJ, Martinez EM, Holavanahalli RK, Hunt CA, Wiechman SA, Gibran NS. Pruritis at 5 and 10 Years Postburn: Report using the 5-D Itch Scale. Supplement to Journal of Burn Care and Research 2013; 34:S75.

² Itchy Skin After Burn Injury. A fact sheet developed by Carrougher GJ and Meyer III WJ in collaboration with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center.

If you would like find out about research opportunities for burn survivors please call:

214-648-9534

or

214-648-9540



WORLD BURN CONGRESS 2013

Meet Burn Survivors and share at the 25th Annual World Burn Congress, 2013

The Phoenix Society's World Burn Congress is an annual international conference that brings together more than 800 burn survivors, their families, care givers, burn care professionals, and firefighters. It is a forum in which we encourage and facilitate the sharing of stories, provide support and increase knowledge of burn recovery. For many it is the first opportunity to meet and share with others who have experienced a burn trauma. The conference also serves as a wonderful learning experience for burn care professionals to better understand the issues that impact burn survivors' lives. Many firefighters who have attended discuss the closure it brings for them as they witness burn survi-

vors and their families living meaningful lives.

The three days of the World Burn Congress are filled with inspirational stories of survival, courage and personal growth. Many have described their experience at WBC as both powerful and life changing.

The 2013 World Burn Congress will be held in Providence, Rhode Island, Oct. 9-12, 2013.

"My family just grew ... This fellowship of burn survivors and their families is a source of inspiration greater than I have ever been able to imagine. To know that I am really not alone and that there are people who care, makes a difference. Just wish I had this way earlier. It's never too late!"
- *Burn Survivor*

"Gathering with so many people of similar injuries, similar problems gave me a boost like no other ... This injury can

happen not only to the burn survivor but also to those surrounding him. We are now prepared to listen, to tell our story, and to support all injured from burns."
- *Firefighter and Burn Survivor*

"This experience gives you insight, strength, and connections to others you will not experience in any other venue. It makes you a better healthcare provider"
- *Physician's Assistant*

"My daughter ... has had such a wonderful time meeting new friends, not only her age, but of all ages. The (Phoenix Society's) World Burn Congress has literally given her new hope -- a refreshed lease on life. Thank you for this opportunity and for this life-changing experience."
- *Family of a Burn Survivor*

The 2013 World Burn Congress will be held in Providence, Rhode Island, Oct. 9-12, 2013. <http://www.phoenix-society.org/programs/worldburncongress/>

Check out video testimonials from World Burn Congress at: <http://www.phoenix-society.org/programs/worldburncongress/testimonials/>

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Support Group



**Third Saturday of each month
Noon to 1 p.m.**

**Parkland Memorial Hospital
7th Floor, South
Seldin Learning Center
5201 Harry Hines Blvd
Dallas, TX**

Please call 214-648-9534

Our monthly Burn Survivor Support Group is a comfortable place for burn survivors, their families and friends to share stories and support one another in the road to recovery. ☀

<http://www.utsouthwestern.edu/education/medical-school/departments/physical-medicine/ntbrms/index.html>

SATELLITE CLINIC - East Texas Medical

Center (ETMC) Tyler

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR
OUR NEXT SATELLITE CLINIC:**

**NOV. 8, 2013
9 a.m. - Noon**

Please call Ruth Davies at
214-648-3654 to schedule
an appointment.

Parkland's Physical Medicine &
Rehabilitation Physician and Burn Surgeon
attend this clinic, along with NTBRMS staff.



**Parkland Health & Hospital
System Dallas**

Burn Clinic

**EVERY THURSDAY
beginning at
1 p.m.**

**6th Floor
5201 Harry Hines Boulevard
Dallas, TX 75235**

**Call to schedule an
appointment
214-590-0168**

When you call please tell the
receptionist that you would like
to make an appointment for the
"BURN CLINIC." Several clinics
are scheduled in this area and
this will be helpful for you to get
to the correct clinic.