**Teacher’s Passport To Understanding Tourette Syndrome (TS)**

For many students, education is challenging. Add into that mix Tourette Syndrome and education becomes even more challenging. Very often whilst in the school environment, students concentrate to suppress their tics, which is both exhausting and compromises their concentration in class.

Whilst TS does not affect intellectual ability, it is a puzzling disorder to understand, even for medical professionals and the lack of knowledge surrounding this complex inherited neurological disorder, is often further exacerbated and distorted by the media.

This research found that the experiences of adolescents with TS at school are more negative when teachers do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the condition. The lack of such knowledge is one of the most disabling aspects of TS and, for many students, this negative experience of school is made up of many challenges such as concentrating in class, unhelpful responses by school staff to their tics and difficulties with fellow students.

Drawing on the research two key conclusions were made:

* In anxiety provoking situations where tics are exacerbated, engaging in physical activity or extra-curricular activities saw tic reduction.
* To eradicate the negative experiences in an educational setting, the TS passport was produced to promote awareness, educate and inform school staff of the disorder and give the young people the confidence to work with school staff.

**Chief Executive of Tourettes Action Suzanne Dobson added:** *We were delighted to be able to commission this research to the UoN. From the research findings, we are proud to have been able to produce the TS Passport. A four sided document where young people with TS can add information about their tics and social situations that heightens/lessens their tics and a space for any medication accompanied with their photograph. This is a perfect document for teachers, especially supply teachers as they can quickly and easily understand about the child’s TS.*

**Professor Georgina Jackson concluded:** *Young people with TS report that anxiety provoking situations increase tics whereas tic reduction is associated with engaging in physical activities and enjoyed extra-curricular pursuits. Observational finding support the notion that engagement in physical activity leads to tic attenuation and alleviation of tic related distress. The sustained effect of physical activity on TS symptomatology suggest a potential therapeutic use in tic management for clinicians and schools.”*

***Notes to Editors:***

Tourettes Action is pleased to announce the completion of research funded by The Big Lottery. Tourettes Action commissioned the University of Nottingham to undertake research on Improving the Psychosocial Experiences of Adolescents with Tourette Syndrome.

The team at UoN were headed up by Professor Georgina M Jackson. The Tourettes Action Research Manager and Chief Executive also provided input into the research project. An overview of the project report can be found at: <http://www.tourettes-action.org.uk/storage/downloads/1372240900_Research_Report_ImPAcT_project_summary.pdf>

Prior to this research project being undertaken, there has been very little research on psychosocial and educational experiences in TS. Most studies have been conducted in North America.

The professionals worked closely with young people with TS to explore the psychosocial and educational experiences and to examine what factors influence tics and social interactions. The young people were aged between 10 and 20.

There were 3 core themes covered:

1. Increasing the understanding of psychosocial experiences of adolescents with TS, with an aim to improving knowledge of those key factors.
2. Improved support within school thus increasing the quality of educational outcome.
3. Factors affecting tic regulation with an aim of improving the understanding of which factors affect TS symptoms.