



Charity Develops New Blackouts Check iPhone Application to identify blackouts which require medical attention

5th May 2011, Stratford Upon Avon:

When does a blackout indicate a serious underlying problem, and when is it just a relatively harmless event? A new iPhone app has been developed by Syncope Trust And Reflex anoxic Seizures (STARS), The Blackouts Trust to identify blackouts which require medical attention. STARS is the leading charity for support and information for both patients and professionals on syncope.

Blackouts are associated with a number of different causes. For the majority, these will not be serious, for example triggered by dehydration or even standing for long periods. However blackouts can more seriously be caused by cardiac arrhythmias or epilepsy, with many adults and even children being misdiagnosed. The Blackouts Check app has been developed specifically to enable patients, family members and doctors to go through questions relating to the high-risk causes of blackouts. Any high risk characteristic of the patient gets a "Red Flag" signifying that the patient should seek medical attention. If no Red Flags are found, then at the end of the Check app, the patient gets a "Green Flag". This means that the blackouts are very likely to be of a simple, harmless type.

It's hoped that the new app will go some way to prevent misdiagnosis and help identify potentially fatal blackouts for medical attention. Each year in the UK 30% of adults and 39% of children are misdiagnosed with epilepsy when in fact they may have convulsive syncope. This can lead to unnecessary medication and treatment.

Julie Fear, from Dorset, was misdiagnosed with epilepsy for 28 years but was correctly diagnosed with Reflex Syncope in 2003. She says a simple app would have guided her to seek a second opinion sooner for her blackouts. "I would have been able to go through the questions on the app and been better prepared to speak to doctors about my blackouts

www.stars.org.uk info@stars.org.uk www.education.stars.org.uk

Patrons: Prof John Stephenson, Prof Christopher Mathais, Prof Rose Anne Kenny, Dr William Whitehouse, Dr Adam Fitzpatrick,

Sir Elton John CBE, Twiggy Lawson, Sir Roger Moore KBE, John Burton Race.

Trustees: Mrs Susan Broatch, Mr Andrew Fear, Prof Rose Anne Kenny, Mrs Cathrine Reid, Dr William Whitehouse.

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highlighting the flags that would have been raised. Knowledge is power and having an app would have helped me avoid the trauma of misdiagnosis.”

Trudie Lobban MBE, Founder and Chief Executive of STARS said, “The app provides the charity with a new medium to reach patients and professionals to ensure that anyone presenting with blackouts receives the correct diagnosis, the appropriate treatment, informed support and sign posting to the appropriate medical professional.”

Dr Adam Fitzpatrick, Consultant Cardiologist, Manchester Heart Hospital, STARS patron and Chair of STARS Medical Advisory Committee, who worked with STARS on the development of the app said, “When a patient has a blackout, doctors try hard to find the correct diagnosis. Often, however, when the patient is seen by the doctor they have completely recovered, and the doctor's examination and tests don't show anything. In all cases, however, there may be sign-posts that can tell if the blackouts are risky or not risky, this is what the Blackouts Check app will highlight. It's important that we reduce the number of patients who are misdiagnosed and this application will help guide patients to identify blackouts that require further medical attention and prompt doctors to ask the right questions to reach a correct diagnosis.

The app is available for £2.99 from the itunes store: <http://www.stars.org.uk/patient-info/diagnosis/blackouts-check-app> . With each download £1.82 of funds go to the Syncope Trust And Reflex anoxic Seizures (STARS).

Ends

Notes:

1. The STARS website can be found at www.stars.org.uk



News Release
Media Contact: info@stars.org.uk
Tel: 01789 451822

Syncope Trust And Reflex anoxic Seizures

www.stars.org.uk

Working together with individuals, families and medical professionals to offer support and information on Syncope and Reflex Anoxic Seizures

2. For more information or to arrange interviews, contact Trudie Lobban
Trudie@stars.org.uk

3. The STARS Blackouts checklist can be found at <http://www.stars.org.uk/patient-info/diagnosis/blackouts-checklist>

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