



Client: Medtronic, Inc.
Project: European patient brochure
Objective: In 12 small-format pages, tell the story of four European tremor patients and their experience with a new treatment, thalamic stimulation therapy. In addition to the patient stories, provide important information about the therapy, what it's for and how it works.

Visual elements

A picture is worth a thousand words. In this small space, we used five visual elements to communicate powerfully, in short-hand.

1. Patient photograph: This woman is doing things her tremor would not allow her to do before treatment: drinking coffee without spilling and writing.
2. We used a graphic of the patient's country of origin (in this case, Sweden) to connect to our European audience.
3. Drawing a spiral is a common neurological test for tremor. This visually links the therapy with the condition it treats.
4. The fluid signature shows that the therapy is working.
5. The blue shading throughout the brochure signals that this contains a message separate from the patient story.

Patient story

I interviewed the patients by phone. For this patient, her nurse was our live translator. All stories included:

- The patient's diagnosis, duration, and effect on quality of life.
- Various therapies that had been tried without success.
- The decision to undergo this therapy which involves the implantation of electrodes in the brain and a stimulator in the chest.
- Physical and emotional benefits of the therapy.

Copy close-up

Because this is a patient-oriented brochure, the tone can be more emotional than would be appropriate for a physician audience.

"Mrs. Edmundsson now has the pleasure of drinking coffee with her neighbors again, without embarrassment. Since her implant, her home life is much happier. She has re-established a social life and she enjoys frequent outings with her grandchildren. She is taking no medications at present. Through tear-filled eyes she recommends, "Take the chance. It's wonderful. It's like a new life."

[End of excerpt.]

Blue section about the therapy

On this first spread, I establish the purpose of the brochure and therapy. I identify in the copy the condition it treats, how tremor is generally treated, and establish the need for a therapy for patients who are not helped by drug therapy.

Treating Tremor with Thalamic Stimulation

People with Tremor Can Now Speak about Their Condition and the Benefits of Thalamic Stimulation Therapy

Gun Britt Edmundsson — Sweden
 Gun Britt Edmundsson, age 65, of Sweden has suffered from Essential Tremor for 25 years. Her primary tremor is in her hands and head with a little tremor in her legs as well. Over the years her condition became progressively worse. "I was just tired of myself. I couldn't do a thing. I dropped things. I couldn't sew. When I tried to eat, I spilled things on myself. I didn't want anyone to see me, so I isolated myself. My self-confidence was totally lacking. I was depressed and angry. My marriage was in jeopardy."
 Although she was taking several medications, they seemed to have no effect on her tremor. Side effects from her medications included dry mouth, depression, anger, and sores on her legs. She became aware of the thalamic stimulation therapy when she heard a doctor speak at a meeting about the new treatment. She consulted with him and decided to undergo the surgery. "When the doctor turned on the stimulator and my hand was free from tremor, I was 'in heaven!'"
 She had some fears that the surgery might hurt some other part of her body, but she decided to take the chance. "The surgery was long and difficult, but when the doctor turned on the stimulator and my hand was free from tremor, I was 'in heaven!'"
 She now has the pleasure of drinking coffee with her neighbors again, without embarrassment. Since her implant, her home life is much happier. She has re-established a social life, and she enjoys frequent outings with her grandchildren. She is taking no medications at present. Through tear-filled eyes she recommends, "Take the chance. It's wonderful. It's like a new life."

This booklet is about thalamic stimulation therapy—a new reversible, implantable therapy for the treatment of disabling tremor.

What is tremor?
 Tremor is uncontrollable rhythmic movement of a limb produced by muscle contractions. Tremor is common in a condition called Essential Tremor and in Parkinson's disease. Tremor may significantly interfere with a person's ability to lead a normal lifestyle.

How is tremor generally treated?
 There is no cure for tremor or its underlying causes. However, effective treatment can help control symptoms. For people with Essential Tremor, propranolol and primidone are the most frequently used medications. Tremor in Parkinson's disease is generally treated with levodopa and other drugs.

How effective is drug therapy?
 Drugs are generally effective in treating tremor for most people. However, in some people the side effects are so significant that they limit the doses that can be tolerated. In addition, the effectiveness of medications can decrease over time. With long-term use of levodopa, people may experience a shortened period of drug effectiveness (wearing-off effect) and sudden, unpredictable changes in movement (on-off effect).