

## Report of Recent Club Speakers



Lou Jensen, Assistant Professor at Creighton University, spoke about strokes and rehabilitation at the Optimist Club on March 27. She teaches Occupational Therapy at Creighton.

Mrs. Jensen discussed the parts of the brain and the functions of each of the different parts of the brain. Then she talked about strokes. Strokes are the third leading cause of death, behind diseases of the heart and cancer. Stroke is the leading cause of disability in the U.S.

A stroke is defined as the interruption of normal blood flow in the brain that causes neurons in the brain to die. It is classified by neurological deficits (slurred speech, clumsiness, loss of balance, etc.) for at least 24 hours. A mini-

stroke are where these deficits typically last for 1-5 minutes and cause no permanent brain damage. A mini-stroke is a warning sign for a future stroke. Some factors that can increase the risk of a stroke are smoking, high cholesterol, uncontrolled diabetes, high sodium/fat diets, previous strokes, and use of birth control pills.

There are two primary types of stroke; blockage in an artery and rupture of an artery. Most strokes (83%) are blockage in an artery and most drugs are for this type of stroke. Studies have shown that one of the newer drugs, t-PA (tissue plasminogen activator) produces a drastic reduction in stroke symptoms in some cases, but it must be administered within 4.5 hours.

A stroke is a medical emergency! Call 911 and get the person to a stroke capable hospital. There is a lot of brain research now that shows the brain can “re-wire” itself after a stroke, allowing a person to gain back many of the functions they lost from a stroke. The latest rehabilitation techniques assist the brain in this repair through focused practice and repetition.