

had led, in a number of cases, to development of CFS. The source of these claims is the Nightingale Research Foundation of Ottawa, a registered charitable organization that concerns itself with this disease.

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, or CFS, is a complicated and serious disease, the causes of which are not known with precision. Although the disease has been dubbed the "malaise of the 1980s", and is also, rather derisively, known as "Yuppie flu", the condition has been recognized for a very long time under a variety of names. Some of these names are: postviral fatigue syndrome, postinfectious neurasthenia, myalgic encephalomyelitis, Icelandic Disease, and Royal Free Disease.

Testimony on CFS was received from Dr. Irving Salit of the University of Toronto and the Toronto Hospital, and from a number of other medical witnesses. (Although invited by the Sub-Committee, the Chairman of the Nightingale Research Foundation, Dr. Byron Hyde, was unable to appear as a witness.) Dr. Salit's clinical research is based on experience with more than 600 patients.²⁴

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome often starts as an influenza-like illness, with typical symptoms of sore throat, fatigue, and swollen lymph glands. Where CFS differs from influenza is that the symptoms do not go away. The principal symptom is an incapacitating fatigue that renders many patients unable to work and, in very serious cases, unable even to get out of bed to perform the basic routines of life.

In general, CFS is a disease of adults, most commonly occurring between the ages of 20 and 40 years, with an average age in the early 30s. Dr. Salit has found that two-thirds of his patients are single, two-thirds are female, many are of higher socio-economic status, and about 20% are in the health profession.

Patients afflicted by CFS have many symptoms in addition to debilitating fatigue, including mild fever, swollen lymph glands, muscle weakness, muscle aching (myalgia), headaches, pains in the joints (arthralgia), sleep disturbance, and neuropsychologic complaints. Depression is also a common symptom associated with CFS.

The causes of CFS are, as suggested above, speculative. The etiology appears to include a "triggering event", some precursor factor that initiates the development of CFS. Infection by the Epstein-Barr Virus (EBV) occurs in about half the cases. Many other viral infections are also associated with the disease, as are a number of bacterial infections. Some patients who have had allergic reactions to various agents, motor vehicle accidents, or other stressful events, have gone on to develop CFS.

The disease can typically continue for a period of about two years. During this time, the patient usually improves slowly and, although recovery may not be complete after two years, the patient is generally very much better. The illness does not appear to shorten a person's lifespan, and does not appear to damage any major organs. There is some suggestion that the condition may recur in some patients.

Several important points were made in connection with this issue during our hearings. The first is that the hepatitis B vaccine currently in use is a highly purified protein produced through recombinant DNA technology. The vaccine is regarded as completely safe by officials at Health and Welfare Canada, and by all of the medical witnesses who appeared before the Sub-Committee.

²⁴ *Proceedings*, Issue 4, p. 12.