

A second point is that currently available information suggests that CFS may be associated with an immune system that is somewhat abnormal, in Dr. Salit's words an immune system that is "sort of turned on a little bit".²⁵ The suggestion was made that this could happen when the immune system was challenged by one of a number of infectious agents, or agents with antigenic properties. It might also happen in a major stress situation, as in a motor vehicle accident or a marriage breakup.

The Sub-Committee has not received, or been referred to, any evidence showing a cause-effect relationship between CFS and hepatitis B immunization. The observation that some 20% of CFS patients may work in the health-care field, together with the fact that about 50% of such persons may have been immunized against hepatitis B, suggests an association between the disease and the vaccine that, on the available evidence, is entirely circumstantial.

No cause-effect relationship having been demonstrated between the hepatitis B vaccine and CFS, the Sub-Committee believes that suggestions of such a relationship are irresponsible and potentially very damaging to medical efforts to control the spread of hepatitis B in this country through immunization programs.

Dr. J.Z. Losos, Director General of Health and Welfare Canada's Laboratory Centre for Disease Control (LCDC) informed the Sub-Committee that studies and surveillance programs have been set up between the LCDC and its collaborators to determine if there is any association between the hepatitis B vaccine and CFS.²⁶ The Sub-Committee agrees with, and commends, this initiative. Because the question has been raised and has received enough publicity to raise public concern, this matter must be dealt with on the basis of evidence rather than speculation.

²⁵ *Proceedings*, Issue 4, p. 9.

²⁶ *Proceedings*, Issue 1, p. 28.