

# Lauderdale Wellness News

A Free Monthly Newsletter For The Friends and Clients of Lauderdale Wellness Center

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## New Studies May Unravel Some Of The Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Mystery...

**L**auderdale – If you or someone you love suffers with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS)... you are probably going to find what you are about to read extremely useful.

According to two articles in the November issue of Archives of General Psychiatry, CFS affects between 400,000 and 900,000 U.S. adults.

The condition is defined as unexplained fatigue that lasts for at least six months, does not get better with rest, and interferes with daily activities. For a formal diagnosis of CFS, fatigue must be accompanied by at least four of eight additional symptoms, including extreme fatigue after exertion, difficulties with memory and concentration, un-refreshing sleep, headaches, muscle pain, joint pain, sore throat and tender lymph nodes.

The authors of one of the articles stated, "Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) is an important public health problem. The causes of CFS are unknown and effective prevention strategies remain elusive... Despite the substantial public burden of CFS, the causes and pathophysiology (underlying changes) of CFS remain unknown, and effective prevention is elusive."

### Unraveling The Mystery

Researchers compared 43 individuals with CFS to 60 non-CFS. The 60-person non-CFS group was the 'control.' Both study groups

were chosen from a general population sample of 56,146 adult residents in Wichita, Kansas.

All 103 participants in the study underwent a medical examination and interview to detect any psychiatric illness. Questionnaires assessed and rated

their level of childhood trauma.

### Results...

Here are the results in the words of Christine Heim, Ph.D., Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Emory University, Atlanta, and colleagues...

*"The CFS cases reported significantly higher levels of childhood trauma... compared with the controls. Exposure to childhood trauma was associated with a 3- to 8-fold increased risk for CFS across different trauma types.."*

### Is childhood adversity the cause of CFS?

This is an extremely important topic, but I concdered not covering it for fear of leaving people with the impression that all CFS sufferers were abused as children. That is certainly not the case.



This study suggests a strong correlation, but childhood trauma is absolutely not the only cause.

### **Researchers' Conclusion...**

*"In sum, it appears that CFS is part of a spectrum of disorders that are associated with childhood adversity. In fact, these disorders might reflect the brain's inability to adapt or compensate in response to challenge, leading toward maladaptive responses and ultimately disease."*

### **So its All in Their Head?**

It would be easy to get the wrong impression: psychology studies, childhood trauma, ambiguous symptoms clearly suggest that CFS is 'all in their head'...Right?

Wrong!

I have a problem in general with the 'all in their head' theory. If you prick your finger, does it feel pain. NO! your brain does. Your brain interprets electrical impulses into feelings. So, technically, everything you have ever experienced is in your head. Which means that unless there is an ice pick sticking out of the side of your head, or are suffering from actual brain pathology, it is all in your head. Stubbed your toe? That pain is all in your head. Boil on your bum? In your head. Tension headaches... yep, them too... So, the 'in their head' theory is baloney.

### **What Are The REAL Answers?**

Diseases with the word 'chronic' in their title generally have one thing in common: there is no one cause. A series of small factors add up to a larger problem, which makes the puzzle much more difficult to solve. Causes of acute fatigue can generally be defined with simple blood work and easily corrected.

If a single cause cannot be defined and the problem remedied, symptoms can become chronic.

According to Dr. Jeff Bland of the Institute for Functional Medicine, in Gig Harbor Washington, CFS develops in four steps.

- 1) Antecedents (predisposing factors) such as childhood stress as described above, hormone imbalances and genetic precursors.
- 2) Triggers acting on the predisposing factors, such as injury, surgery, chemical exposure, infection, sleep deprivation, hormonal transition and yes, emotional trauma.
- 3) Altered Mediators – altered stress hormones or inflammatory markers

So solving the CFS riddle involves thinking of the body in a non-linear fashion. We are a web of interconnecting systems and one change can effect many things. The human body has an incredible capacity to adapt, but sometimes a series of smaller things can add up to a much larger problem.

The take home message here is that your emotional state can, and does, affect and create illness. There is no doubt genetics play a role in disease. But stress and emotions are often ignored because they are difficult to measure.

Complete health is both mental and physical. Ignore one and the other will soon deteriorate. And from these two new studies – what happens to us – emotionally as children – can manifest itself as physical illness as an adult.

All of which puts even more emphasis on acquiring techniques to eliminate and reduce stress in you and your family's life.

# Inspiration Can Come From the Strangest of Places

It's incredible.

Two people can look at the exact same thing... One will see nothing but pain, suffering and misery. The other will see kindness, love and opportunity.

The same two people can share the exact same experience. The former will complain and moan about how it was nothing but a waste of time... and burden. The latter credits it for being the breakthrough that changed his or her life... forever.

One of the greatest lessons I've ever learned was that – just about all the time – it's NOT what you are looking at – it's NOT what happens – it's NOT the circumstance – it's YOU. How you look at and react to whatever you encounter that changes, alters and shapes your life.

For example, last year I watched a funny movie. A comedy. During the movie... besides laughing for a couple of hours (loudly I might add), I gleaned one of the most motivational examples I have even seen.

I'm going to tell what that movie was... and... what I found so motivational. But first, let me tell you what triggered me to think of it again – after over a year...

## Can You Ride A Bike?

Really... can you ride a bike? This may seem like an odd question. Everyone can ride a bike... right? Well, I just read a news article about Susan McLucas. So what? Well, Miss McLucas teaches adults to ride bikes. And over the past 20 years, she has taught nearly 2,000. But that's not the good part....

The good part is – when the news reporter interviewed some of Miss McLucas's adult students – there was a common reason for traveling for bike riding lessons...

## Secret Shame...

One woman told how – for years -- when vacationing on Cape Cod, her friends would always ask her to go for a bike ride. She always had to come up with a new reason: A lie to cover up the embarrassment of not being able to ride a bike.

Another said she heard about Lance Armstrong. How he overcame cancer to become a world champion. And even though the fear of falling and being embarrassed was great – when he thought of what Lance had done... and what it would feel like to finally ride a bike... pushed her forward.

## Movie Link...

Which bring us to the movie link: This is going to sound a little strange at first – but stick with me – we're almost to the good part... The movie was "Dodgeball." And, even though it was a silly comedy – one part that was extremely motivating. And that part is our common link here, because it involved Lance Armstrong...

You see... the hero of the movie (played by Vince Vaughn) has led his team to the finals of the world championship of dodge ball. But, due to some stupid personal problems – he's going to skip out on his team and not show up for the final game. This is where it gets good...

He is just about to leave and he is drinking in the airport bar. Lance Armstrong walks up to him and says he has been watching the dodge ball tournament and he is a big fan. Vince's character tells Lance he is not going to play in the final...

Lance says... **"I thought about quitting when I was diagnosed with testicular, prostate and brain cancer all at the same time. But with the love and support of my family, I got back on my bike and won the Tour De France five times. But I guess you have a good reason to quit. I guess if people didn't quit when the going got tough, they wouldn't have anything to regret for the rest of their lives..."**

Heavy line for a comedy, right? I guess inspiration can come from the strangest places.

And whatever happened in Dodgeball?

Vince made it back for the game and his team won the championship. Of course...

If only life were that easy... ☺

## Did You Know?...

Can your stomach this? The sight or smell of food is enough to make our stomachs growl. But what is it the gut wants, and what will it do with dinner when it gets it? In humans, the stomach serves as the central place where food is mixed, broken down, and reaches a state where it can be passed into the intestines for further breakdown and absorption of the nutrients. Almost all vertebrates and some invertebrates have a stomach in one form or another. The goldfish has no stomach, while the cow has four. The fact that humans chew their food, dictates the way in which their stomach functions. Since it's already had a major mastication, the stomach does not need to go through a physical process of grinding what's put into it. On the other hand, birds have only beaks, and to compensate for the lack of teeth, their digestive system includes a primary "stomach", or gizzard, which does the crushing for them. The lucky cow has no less than four stomachs, each having a specific role, such as the rumen, where complex plant materials like cellulose are broken down. Considering all the mashing and mixing that goes on, the stomach must have a fairly solid structure. In man, that means four tough layers, from the serosa, or outer fibrous membrane; to a three ply layer of muscle; then a submucous layer; and finally, the inner lining or mucous layer, which is a whole complex of its own. The sight, smell and presence of food triggers the stomach to produce chemicals, acids, and other fluids to aid in digestion. More than 35,000 gastric glands in the stomach lining, are part of a system by which the stomach "destroys" food, while protecting itself from the harmful acids it produces. In order to do this, the lining cells shed and are replaced every 36-48 hours.

## Tip of The Month - "Ten Factors That Can Make You FAT!"



You have to admit. For almost all of us – the biggest holiday gift we could ever get would be to drop a few “LB’s.” Imagine this: You have a great holiday dinner. Stuff your face with all the things you love to eat. Then you eat some more... You barely waddle away from the table and make it to the couch... or... favorite recliner. Drift off into a sweet little nap. That’s followed by a little TV... and then... you waddle into bed. For a nice, long, winter slumber. And, when you wake up the next morning – completely rested... **You Also Lost 10 Pounds!!!** Sounds great – doesn’t it? Well, the bad news is – it ain’t happenin’ that way!!! Not even close...

All cruel holiday jokes aside – researchers in a new study say the prevalence of obesity has increased substantially since 1970. According to this study published in the *International Journal of Obesity*, “*Although the causes are uncertain, many contend that environmental changes are almost certainly responsible and focus overwhelmingly on food marketing practices and technology and on institution-driven reductions in physical activity (the 'Big Two'), eschewing the importance of other influences. This has created a hegemony whereby the importance of the Big Two is accepted as established and other putative factors are not seriously explored. The result may be well-intentioned, but ill-founded proposals for reducing obesity rates.*”

The researchers went on to say that too much emphasis has been placed on these “Big Two” for the obesity epidemic. And that the evidence that has been used to support the “Big Two” has been largely circumstantial. So... they came up with 10 factors that contribute to the epidemic. And admit – that these 10 “causes” are also supported by circumstantial evidence, “*but in many cases, at least equally compelling.*” So much for the notion that science is “exact”... Anyway... here are the 10 factors they implicated in the crime of obesity – only convictable in a civil case because all the evidence is circumstantial...

1. **Sleep Debt** – according to the study, the average hours of sleep has decreased from over 9 to just over 7 among adults.
2. **Endocrine Disruptors** – Endocrine disruptors are industrially produced substances that can affect endocrine function. According to the study, endocrine disruptors have increased in the food chain. This one was pretty complicated and we’ll leave it at that!
3. **Reduction In Variability In Ambient Temperature** – There is a temperature range in which energy does not have to be expended for your body to maintain homeostasis. Both the increase in homes with air conditioning and heat has decreased this energy expenditure. I guess no one sweats or shivers anymore!
4. **Smoking** – Smokers tend to weigh less than non-smokers and weight gain follows smoking cessation. And the rate of cigarette smoking among U.S. adults steadily declined during the past several decades.
5. **Pharmaceutical Iatrogenesis** – Many prescription drugs cause weight gain.
6. **Changes In Distribution Of Ethnicity And Age** – Shift in population to ethnic groups that have a higher percentage of obesity and living longer.
7. **Increasing Gravida Age** – The average age of birth mothers has increased. Having an elderly mother has been found to be a risk factor in obesity.
8. **Intrauterine And Intergenerational Effects** – Complicated... basically environmental changes that effect gene expression.
9. **Greater BMI Is Associated With Greater Reproductive Fitness Yielding Selection For Obesity-Predisposing Genotypes** – Again, complicated. Basically, obesity can be passed on genetically and being overweight has been correlated with having more children.
10. **Assortative Mating And Floor Effects** – We’re not even going to try to explain this one. If this interests you – go to <http://cancerres.aacrjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/66/21/10357> for the details.

We listed them all here – but the ones of great interest were 1, 4 and 5. **Because they are under our control.**