

Chronic fatigue syndrom(CFS)

CFS is one of differential diagnoses when a patient mainly complains of fatigue that's lasted for a couple of weeks. It is often associated with difficulty concentrating, headache, and sore throat.

Also the diagnosis of CFS is one of exclusion. It is generally made if the patient has a typical history, and no abnormality can be detected on physical examination or the screening tests.

Criteria for diagnosis

1. Clinically evaluated, unexplained, persistent or relapsing fatigue that is of new or definite onset; is not the result of ongoing exertion; is not alleviated by rest; and results in substantial reduction of previous levels of occupational, educational, social, or personal activities; and
2. Four or more of the following symptoms that persist or recur during six or more consecutive months of illness and do not predate the fatigue;
 - Self-reported impairment in short-term memory or concentration
 - Sore throat
 - Tender cervical or axillary nodes
 - Muscle pain
 - Multijoint pain without redness or swelling
 - Headaches of a new pattern or severity
 - Unrefreshing sleep
 - Postexertional malaise lasting >24h

This definition is intentionally restrictive, to maximize the chances that research studies will detect significant associations if such associations truly exist.

There have been lots of studies to investigate possible causes of CFG, for example, infection, immune dysfunction, endocrine-metabolic dysfunction, neutrally-mediated hypotension, depression, and sleep dysfunction, Although none of them has not been confirmed yet so far.

Treatment

There is no cure, no prescription drugs have been developed specifically for CFS. Therefore the primary treatment goal is relief of symptoms. Fortunately many symptoms of CFG respond to treatment. NSAIDs alleviate headache, diffuse pain, and feverishness. Pratical advise regarding life-style is also important. A comprehensive approach to physical, psychological, and social aspects of well-being is the key to managing CFS.

References

Up To Date
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine