

# Chronic fatigue: a symptom of 21st century life or something else?

Many of those who have suffered from chronic fatigue syndrome have been told their condition is 'all in the mind'. However a new book refutes that stating that ME is almost certainly a physical, viral condition



**W**hoever the sufferer — young or old, man or woman — he or she is still likely to have been told their condition is "psychosomatic" (all in the mind), depression is the root cause and antidepressants the only sensible answer.

In Professor Basant K Puri's ground-breaking new book he outlines a very different way of looking at ME (myalgic encephalomyelitis); historical and contemporary evidence are combined to show how ME is almost certainly a physical, or organic condition resulting from viral and other influences that reduce essential chemicals in the body. The book also tells how chronic fatigue syndrome/ME can be treated in a natural and cost effective way.

Professor Puri gained his primary medical degrees at Cambridge University School of Medicine and then went on to train in psychiatry and imaging in Cambridge and London, UK. He is now a Consultant and Professor at Hammersmith Hospital, London, and Head of the Lipid Neurosciences Group at Imperial College London.

Since early 2000, he has been using natural fatty acids to treat patients with chronic fatigue syndrome. He has also been actively researching this disorder with colleagues at Imperial College, London, using state-of-the-art electrophysiological and brain scanning techniques.

His treatment approach and research findings have been published in authoritative medical journals and he has given many talks at international medical conferences. Approximately 80% of his patients treated have seen a marked improvement in their condition.

Throughout the book Puri demonstrates why and how EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) is essential to recovery, how to take and prescribe it, what supplements to take in conjunction with it, and how to change your lifestyle to promote recovery.

Professor Puri starts with the history of chronic fatigue syndrome, by looking at neurasthenia in the 19th century. Apparently there were many famous sufferers, such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Marcel Proust. There have even been epidemic outbreaks of the illness, as in the case of the 1934 Los Angeles County Hospital epidemic and an outbreak in 1955 at the Royal Free Hospital.

Another famous ME sufferer, Lord Puttnam is perhaps best known for his blockbusting movie career, having spent 30 years as an independent film producer. With epics *The Mission*, *The Killing Fields*, *Local Hero*, *Chariots Of Fire*, *Midnight Express*, *Bugsy Malone*, and the *Memphis Belle* to his credit. As former chairman and chief executive officer of Columbia Pictures from 1986 to 1988 — the only non-American ever to have run a Hollywood Studio. David retired from film production in 1998 and now focuses on his work in education. He credits Prof Puri's method for helping him with his own ME.

He says: "Thanks to Chronic Fatigue Syndrome by Professor Puri I've become far more disciplined and practical about dealing with my ME. More sensible forms of exercise, and a renewed emphasis on the best possible EPA."

In spite of clinical features pointing to an infectious underlying cause, some psychiatrists still label the condition as "hysterical". This is reflected by the fact that many doctors still think that chronic fatigue syndrome, or ME as it is also sometimes called, is "all in the mind". In a hard-hitting chapter of his book, Professor Puri deals with this in a thorough way and shows why this "hysteria" notion is not consistent with the known facts. He goes on to develop a logical case for treating the illness in an entirely safe and natural way.

Omega-3 fatty acids play a critical role in the development and function of the central nervous system.

Emerging research establishes an association between omega-3 fatty acids (alpha-linolenic, eicosapentaenoic, docosahexaenoic) and major depressive disorder. Evidence from epidemiological, laboratory and clinical studies suggest that dietary lipids and other associated nutritional factors may influence vulnerability and outcome in depressive disorders. Research in this area is growing at a rapid pace.

Essential fatty acids cannot be synthesized by the human body, they must be derived from dietary sources. Flaxseed, hemp, Linseed and walnut oils are all generally rich sources of the parent omega-3, alpha linolenic acid (ALA). Dietary ALA can be metabolized in the liver to the longer-chain omega-3 eicosapentaenoic (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA). Ageing, illness and stress, as well as excessive amounts of omega-6 rich oils (corn, safflower, sunflower, cottonseed) can all compromise conversion.

The dietary intake of omega-3 fatty acids has dramatically declined in Western countries over the last century.

#### So why EPA and not DHA?

The primary reason is that some leading experts believe that DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) may inhibit the beneficial actions of EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid). In addition, clinical trials show that as the ratio of EPA to DHA increases in a supplement, so does its effectiveness.

Professor Puri explains: "In general it has been found that as the ratio of EPA to DHA rises in the supplement used in clinical trials of certain conditions, such as depression and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), the ability of the supplement to improve the condition also rises."

For these reasons the EPA to DHA ratio in VegEPA capsules is the highest possible; there is no DHA in them at all. Each VegEPA™ capsule contains around 280mg of ultra-pure EPA. It is the purest and arguably the most effective EPA supplement on the market, according to Puri.

Specialized brain scanning (proton neurospectroscopy) by Prof. Puri and others has shown clear chemical changes in the brain in affected patients. The levels of free choline are raised. This means that the choline is not being incorporated into phospholipids in the brain. There are also changes in omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, and immune system changes. All these abnormalities can be treated effectively by taking safe nutritional supplementation and clinical results have been excellent.

#### Credits

Puri B.K. (2005) *Chronic Fatigue Syndrome: A Natural Way to Treat M.E.* Hammersmith Press, London. ISBN 1-905140-00-2. Available from good bookshops or from [www.hammersmithpress.co.uk](http://www.hammersmithpress.co.uk). To call to stock the book directly call: 0845 1300424 or access [www.vegEPA.com](http://www.vegEPA.com).



## READER GIVEAWAY

The first 20 lucky readers to write in will receive a copy of Professor Basant Puri's book *Chronic Fatigue: A Natural Way to Treat M.E.* For your chance to win a copy of the book please send a postcard to: **HM Chronic Fatigue Reader Offer, Health**

Matters, Communications International Group, Linen Hall, 162-168 Regent Street, London W1R 5TB.

## A real physical disease

- Strong scientific evidence suggests that chronic fatigue syndrome is a real physical disease.
- Specialized brain scanning (proton neurospectroscopy) has shown clear chemical changes in the brain in affected patients.
- There are also changes in omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, and immune system changes.
- All these abnormalities can be attributed to an infectious cause, probably involving a virus.
- The illness can be treated effectively by taking safe nutritional supplementation. Clinical results using this approach have been excellent.
- For an adult, 2,240 mg pure EPA (the omega-3 fatty acid eicosapentaenoic acid) and 800 mg virgin evening primrose oil should be taken daily. This is best taken in the form of eight VegEPA capsules daily; four each morning and four each evening, preferably with food.
- It is vitally important to avoid taking supplements containing the fatty acid DHA (docosahexaenoic acid).

Unfortunately this is found in almost all fish oil preparations. VegEPA is completely free of DHA.

- It is also important not to take too much vitamin A. (Whereas fish oil preparations often contain vitamin A, VegEPA is free of this vitamin.)
- People suffering from chronic fatigue syndrome should ensure that their intake of B vitamins, vitamin C, zinc, selenium and magnesium is adequate. This is because they act as cofactors, that help the body use EPA and evening primrose oil. Professor Puri recommends doing this through the diet. He gives extensive details of foods that are rich in each of these vitamins and minerals.
- Virgin evening primrose oil is much to be preferred to ordinary evening primrose oil preparations. The virgin form retains more of the natural goodness in this oil. In particular, the virgin form contains natural substances, such as free radical scavengers, that are extremely good for our health. (VegEPA contains virgin, cold-pressed, non-refined evening primrose oil.)

## essential lines

VegEPA contains ultra-pure EPA (an omega-3 fatty acid) and cold-pressed, virgin evening primrose oil, a source of omega-6 fatty acid. EPA is extremely important as it enables the brain and body to produce substances that are necessary for health and well-being. Trials show that EPA benefits sufferers of many mental and physical illnesses and prevents potential health problems, says Igenus. The EPA in VegEPA is extracted from fish oil by distillation, so unwanted materials are left behind. Evening primrose oil (EPO), which contains GLA, an omega6 fatty acid, keeps joints healthy, alleviates premenstrual tension and menopausal symptoms and rejuvenates the skin, hair and nails. Unlike some other preparations, the EPO in VegEPA is obtained without the use of chemicals. VegEPA combines the benefits that both EPA AND EPO bring to the body. It contains completely natural substances and the outer shells of the capsules are vegetarian.

IGENUS 0845 1300 424



Chronic fatigue sufferers might benefit from the healthy, fat-free and caffeine-free "quick-fix" boost of Dextro Energy Tablets, as it can re-energise tired muscles within 5-10 minutes once consumed, says Ceuta. The tablets contain 80% dextrose — the most important source of energy in healthy individuals as the body can absorb and

process it faster than any other food source. More complex forms of sugar have to be broken down to simple sugars first before they can be absorbed from the gut and into the bloodstream. It is the only substance that the human brain can absorb directly and stimulate mental performance. Compared with other suggested "quick-fixes" out there, Dextro Energy tablets contain a lot more carbohydrate (90.7g/100g) than say, for instance, a Mars Bar (69g/100g), and small trace amounts of fat (0.3g/100g as opposed to 17.4g/100g). The handy high-energy, no caffeine tablets come in packs of 12 and are available in original, orange, lemon, blackcurrant and tropical flavours.

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