



# Wellbeing Clinic Newsletter

## *Today's Focus: **CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME(ME/CFS) AND LONG COVID***

*ME/CFS disease is a debilitating, life changing illness, which often leaves the sufferers unable to function normally for long periods of time or even permanently. There are many symptoms associated with the disease, the most common being persistent weakness and low levels of energy, due to which the patients are unable to tolerate even mild exertion and suffer post-exertion malaise. This makes it extremely difficult to perform any usual daily activities such as going to work or school and generally to lead a normal life. Other symptoms include immune disorders, frequent infections, various pains including muscle and joint pains, respiratory issues, sleep disruption, neurological disorders including cognitive lapses and difficulty concentrating, cardiovascular disorders, bowel problems and more.*

*Conventional medicine offers no cure for the disease, the treatments currently available can only help manage the symptoms. But, did you know that you do not need to resign yourself to fate and that Traditional Chinese Medicine can actually help?*

It is estimated that prior to Covid 19 pandemic some 17 to 24 millions of people worldwide suffered from ME/CFS and that approximately 50% of those remained undiagnosed. Women tend to be more frequently affected than men.

Covid -19 pandemic has resulted in many patients suffering from a Long Covid condition, which has symptoms similar to ME/CFS. It is estimated that some 1-2% of people who had a Covid-19 infection could develop a Long Covid.

The disease is very difficult to diagnose as it has no "specific" symptoms and patients usually don't "look ill". Diagnosis is achieved by eliminating other potential conditions associated with the symptoms, which can take a very long time. This often

leaves the patients with no access to treatment or support and many may also suffer stigmatisation or discrimination as a result. Sometimes the condition is misdiagnosed as depression or other mental illness.

Conventional medicine currently offers no cure, available treatments are focused on managing the various symptoms of the disease.

There is generally very little understanding of these conditions within the medical and scientific community and research efforts as well as public funding for research are very limited compared to other diseases.

There are no definitive scientific conclusions as to what causes the disease or how it develops, however

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369 Upper Richmond Road West, SW14 7NX London

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research so far indicates that immune system plays a significant role.

The disease often begins after a viral infection such as mononucleosis (glandular fever), SARS, EBV and more recently Covid-19, but in more rare cases may also be triggered by a bacterial infection, accident or surgery. The persons diagnosed with the disease tend to have elevated levels of antibodies, which the body typically uses to fight infections.

It is thought that the initial infection triggers an overreactive or misdirected immune system response, after which the immune system does not come back to its original state (as it normally should). As a result, the immune system disrupts the function of the autonomous nervous system, which controls all the body's involuntary

functions such as heartbeat, breathing, dillution of blood vessels and digestion. If during exertion blood cannot flow freely through the blood vessels, fatigue, muscle pain and poor concentration will result because no oxygen is available to produce energy.

Some research also suggests that the original infection may affect the body at a molecular level as mitochondrial fragmentation has been observed in people diagnosed with the disease. Mitochondria are essetially "energy producers" within almost each of our body cells and are responsible for our physical and mental performance. When mitochondria lose their interconnected "mesh" structure, they can no longer produce energy.

Some further research has suggested that ME/CFS may be a variant of

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autoimmune disease, however trials involving treatment of ME/CFS patients with a drug used for autoimmune disorders did not bring desired results.

### ***So, why and how would Traditional Chinese Medicine be able to help?***

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has an excellent track record in managing the body's energy levels as well as in treating many difficult, chronic diseases.

TCM has been practiced for thousands of years, therefore it has developed and perfected its treatment methods a very long time before the modern science and medicine came to exist and long before the current modern diagnosis methods were available.

TCM adopts a holistic approach which relies on **stimulating the body's natural ability to re-balance and heal itself**. This is why it is particularly well suited to treat such complex diseases as ME/CFS or Long Covid, which simultaneously affect multiple body systems and organs at several levels.

The TCM treatment focuses on bringing back the normal function of the immune system and on restoring the subtle balance between all the interconnected body systems to ensure their healthy functioning.

If you suffer from such condition and would like to know more, please get in touch.

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