

Targeted Research May Hold The Key To Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

(NAPSA)—New research may help explain and one day find a cure for the serious medical condition chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), also called chronic fatigue and immune dysfunction syndrome (CFIDS).

CFIDS can be devastating, causing profound fatigue, pain and neurological difficulties. Over the past 15 years, scientists have identified numerous biological abnormalities in CFIDS patients, but a cure remains elusive.

To gain a better understanding of this complex illness, The CFIDS Association of America brought together top medical experts from many medical disciplines to evaluate research findings.

The scientists agreed that the following problems play a role in CFIDS:

- **Neurological abnormalities.** Research has shown that orthostatic intolerance (OI), a condition that arises from miscommunication between the brain and heart and causes dramatic changes in heart rate and blood pressure when a person stands or sits upright, plays an important role in CFIDS. Almost 95 percent of CFIDS patients in a 1995 study had at least one form of OI.

- **Hormone imbalance.** Some CFIDS patients have lower than normal levels of cortisol, a hormone that plays a key role in sleep and fatigue. There is also evidence that cytokines, chemical messengers activated by the immune systems when the body is experienc-



The reduced ability to resist infections, neurological problems and hormone imbalances play a role in CFIDS.

ing an infection, play a role in causing CFIDS symptoms.

- **Reduced ability to resist infections.** Researchers have found that CFIDS patients may have a defective form of an enzyme that normally helps the immune system fight viral infection. Studies have also shown that some patients' natural killer cells, which form the body's first line of defense against viruses, are not as active.

CFIDS strikes people of all ages, ethnic and socioeconomic groups. Studies have estimated that more than 800,000 Americans suffer from CFIDS. Although the illness is most prevalent in women, it afflicts men and children as well.

To find out more about CFIDS, visit The CFIDS Association of America's Web site at www.cfids.org or call 1-800-442-3437.