

More Funding Needed To Support Research And Awareness Surrounding Debilitating Condition

by Dr. Barbara Shorter

(NAPSA)—You or someone you care about may be among the 4 million people in the United States with interstitial cystitis (IC) yet not even know it. IC is a chronic, painful disorder of the bladder. Symptoms are similar to those of bladder infection but tests don't show infection and antibiotics don't help. It can be debilitating—people who have it say it can feel like shards of glass being ground into the bladder—and may take years to diagnose.

In severe cases, IC patients suffer from unrelenting pain that necessitates trips to the bathroom as often as every 10 to 15 minutes—day and night. Some have symptoms that prevent them from riding in a car or even leaving their homes, greatly limiting their ability to work, travel or participate in leisure activities.

The cause is unknown, and while most doctors say they know the symptoms, only 19 percent say they've ever seen a patient with IC, a figure that recent prevalence data indicate is far too low. There's no cure, but once it's been diagnosed, doctors and patients can find effective treatments. These can include diet changes, stress reduction, physical therapy, and medications.

While organizations such as the Interstitial Cystitis Association (ICA) are providing critical education and support to patients and the medical community, funding surrounding IC needs to increase to generate awareness and new research initiatives. As IC patient Mona Schlossberg states, "It is my hope that more funding for research might find better treatments, and eventually a cause and a cure for this condition."

A number of promising clinical trials testing potential treatments are under way, according to the



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ICA, the only nonprofit health association solely dedicated to improving the quality of health care and lives of people living with IC. But more research is needed.

You can be part of the solution by joining the ICA. The organization focuses its efforts on advocacy, research and education surrounding IC. To learn more about IC, visit www.ichelp.org. Interested individuals can also find the ICA on Facebook at www.facebook.com/InterstitialCystitisAssociation or follow the ICA on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/ICHelp>.

Dr. Shorter, EdD, RD, CDN, is an associate professor of nutrition and director of the Undergraduate Nutrition program at Long Island University. A patient herself, she understands the desperation, anger and anxiety of living with IC. She's also lead author of "Effect of Comestibles on Symptoms of Interstitial Cystitis," published in The Journal of Urology.

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