

## Treat an MS Patient? Yes You Can!

By VAN MERKLE, DC, CCN, DCBCN, DABCI

All through life, we treasure our independence. We start fighting for it as children (frustrating our parents to no end) and struggle to maintain it as we age. But imagine being just 44 years old and barely able to walk across the room. As chiropractors, we must remember that we have more tools on hand than a simple adjustment to help patients with major problems.

My patient was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) when she was just 29 years old. Hoping to curb the effects of this disease, she followed her doctor's advice by taking the MS drug Avonex, and then Capoxone when her symptoms got worse. By the time she came to my office 15 years later (2005), she had lost most of her self-sufficiency – she needed assistance to walk, suffered from muscle weakness, loss of balance, deteriorating vision and bladder control problems. She could no longer drive, which was a huge blow, and relied on her husband to go anywhere.

MS is an autoimmune disease affecting 2.5 people worldwide, with 200 new cases diagnosed each week.<sup>1</sup> An inflammatory process creates leaks into the central nervous system, allowing a special set of lymphocytes known as “T-cells” to sneak in. These T-cells mistakenly attack the myelin sheath, a fatty substance surrounding and protecting nerve fibers and the central nervous system, and can

### Moving Toward Better Health: A Chronology of Improvement

It has been a delight to assist my patient on her journey toward better health. She first came to my office in November of 2005 and has made amazing progress by simply using vitamins, nutrients and chelators to make her body healthier.

*April 2006:* Can independently walk up and down stairs, feels more energized, and has better bladder control and improved vision. She is able to walk on her toes but not heels, and still has balance problems.

*December 2006:* Walks with confidence on both toes and heels, and can balance on either leg. She has also regained her ability to drive, giving her a renewed sense of independence.

*March 2007:* Off all MS meds and still feeling great.

*April 2008:* Able to dance the grapevine and now incorporates dancing into her workout routine.

*April 2009:* Has near-normal mobility and walking; can stand on one leg with her eyes closed, walks quickly and goes up steps without holding on. She is doing the grapevine dance with good fluidity; not perfect but improving. We added some moves to make it more difficult and other dances and fun exercises to make therapy fun. Even though she is so much better than when we first saw her, she continues to improve under our care and guidance in these past four years.

also damage the nerve fibers themselves. As the myelin heals, it forms scar tissue called *sclerosis*. When the brain tries to communicate with the body, such as telling the legs to walk, the message carried by nerve impulses must pass through these scarred areas and can become distorted and interrupted on their way to the leg muscles, causing impairments in sensation, delayed/unbalanced movement and other problems.<sup>2</sup>

While MS is not considered a fatal disease, the struggle to live as productively as one desires can cause anxiety, anger and depression, especially as patients face increasing limitations. There are several drugs on the market which claim to “slow” the progression of MS; however, these pharmaceuticals come with some hefty side effects like liver damage, heart problems, lowered immunity, depression, anxiety, chest pain, fatigue, infections, bone marrow suppression, thinning hair, nausea and mouth sores. One of these drugs is also a strong chemotherapy treatment, which can cause cardiac toxicity or a deadly type of cancer called *acute myelogenous leukemia*.<sup>3</sup> These medications are incredibly harmful to the body and can cost up to \$1,000 per month! It is your responsibility to ensure patients know there are better options.

As researchers delve into the cause of this condition, environmental triggers continue to stand out as major factors in disease development. For example, MS occurs more frequently in areas further from the equator (i.e., further from the sun, providing citizens with typically lower levels of vitamin D).<sup>4</sup> Researchers have also found a reduced risk for multiple sclerosis among those who received more sun exposure during childhood and early adolescence.<sup>5</sup>

Toxins such as mercury can also mimic the damages done by MS

### Toxic Urinalysis Test With Chelator (DMSA): Patient Results

Test Date	Arsenic	Lead	Mercury
December 2005	210 $\mu\text{g/g}$	12 $\mu\text{g/g}$	18 $\mu\text{g/g}$
April 2006	84 $\mu\text{g/g}$	2.4 $\mu\text{g/g}$	8.5 $\mu\text{g/g}$
April 2007	7.6 $\mu\text{g/g}$	1.9 $\mu\text{g/g}$	2.1 $\mu\text{g/g}$
April 2008	11 $\mu\text{g/g}$	5.7 $\mu\text{g/g}$	3.8 $\mu\text{g/g}$

\*Clinical reference ranges: arsenic 70-130  $\mu\text{g/g}$ ; lead 4-5  $\mu\text{g/g}$ ; mercury 3-4  $\mu\text{g/g}$ .

*Toxins such as mercury can mimic the damage done by MS. A University of Calgary study showed that even small doses of mercury quickly strip neurons of their protective layers. It makes sense to reduce our exposure to toxins and use nutritional therapy to allow the body to reach an optimal point of health and heal itself.*

non-harmful – to allow the body to reach an optimal point of health and heal itself.

Keeping environmental influences in mind, there are a couple of initial steps that should be taken when assisting a patient with MS:

- If your state allows it, order a comprehensive blood test (glucose, hemoglobin A1C, chemistries, liver panel, lipid panel, hepatic panel, full cholesterol panel, C-reactive protein and CBC panel). This will give you a good idea of how the patient's body is functioning and give you a baseline to show improvements/deterioration. (Some states such as Georgia, New York and Michigan limit a chiropractor's ability to order bloodwork. Call your state board for more information.)

the body's ability to heal, causing neuron disruptions and many symptoms similar to MS. The body expels toxins three ways – through the hair, the urine and the stool. High levels indicate overexposure to toxic elements. There are several ways we are exposed to toxins every day; however, getting a strong water filter, using only stainless steel or glass cookware, eating organic and ceasing to use pesticides/herbicides around the house are all good steps toward reducing exposure. If mercury levels are high, patients also may want to consider removing any amalgam dental fillings and eliminating any high-mercury fish from their diet. Low levels are not necessarily a good thing. We are exposed to toxins every day

in our environment and if they are not being expelled from the body, they are stuck inside us doing damage. The use of chelators like chlorella, DMSA, spirulina and cilantro will help draw out these toxins.

For my patient, there were no major red flags in her blood test, but we did find a moderately low vitamin D level of 42 ng/mL, which is inadequate for the level of cellular repair needed to battle MS. Taking a daily supplement of 5,000 IU will help boost this level. Additionally, of 16 toxins tested in the hair, 13 returned with high levels including aluminum, mercury, lead, arsenic, nickel and many more.

We ran a urine test using a chelator called DMSA to determine if there were additional levels of toxins that were not being eliminated

from the body and found hidden stores of arsenic, lead and mercury that were all at least twice the test standard clinical limits. My patient's body was bogged down by toxins.

With T-cells cutting into the myelin sheath of neurons and high levels of mercury destroying neuron microtubules, this patient could not heal quickly enough to keep up with the damage, so her MS symptoms progressed at a rapid rate. By eliminating her exposure to these toxins, we are taking a great deal off stress off her system, allowing her body to heal and repair faster.

I used the chelator DMSA in intervals to remove toxic elements from her body and retested annually to determine what hidden stores still remained. As these numbers drop, the body burden of toxins decreases as well. The numbers did rise slightly in 2008, which is not necessarily a bad thing. This most

likely shows her body's improved ability to excrete toxic elements.

Her hair test also greatly improved, going from 13 high toxic element values in 2005 to just four moderately elevated toxins in 2008. Most importantly, she can now do things that were next to impossible four years ago, like drive, walk across a room unassisted and be as independent as she sees fit. ■

## References

1. "Who Gets MS?" National Multiple Sclerosis Society, 2008.
2. "What Causes MS?" National Multiple Sclerosis Society, 2009.
3. "The Disease-Modifying Drugs." National Multiple Sclerosis Society, 2008.
4. "What Causes MS?" *Op Cit*.
5. van der Mei IAF, et al. Past exposure to sun, skin phenotype, and risk of multiple sclerosis: case control study. *British Medical Journal*, Aug. 9, 2003;327:316.
6. "How Mercury Causes Brain Neuron Degeneration." University of Calgary Faculty of Medicine. <http://commons.ucalgary.ca/mercury/>