

COLLAGEN DISEASE IS A MAJOR CAUSE OF ADHESIVE ARACHNOIDITIS (AA)

After reviewing the history and MRIs of well over 600 cases, we have determined that at least 50% of persons with AA have either a genetic or acquired collagen disease. The genetic cases usually have hypermobile Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (hEDS) and acquired cases are usually initiated by the Epstein Barr Virus (EBV) or other infection. In both instances an autoimmune process is created that damages collagen in multiple body tissues outside and inside the spinal canal including the arachnoid lining, cauda equina nerve roots, and intervertebral discs. It is incumbent on all parties concerned with AA to become knowledgeable about what appears to be a major, underlying cause of AA in the 21st Century. This bulletin is the first in a series on this critical discovery.

WHAT IS COLLAGEN? Collagen is the protein/amino acid matrix that makes up what is called “connective tissue” which are the microscopic fibers that glue organs together.

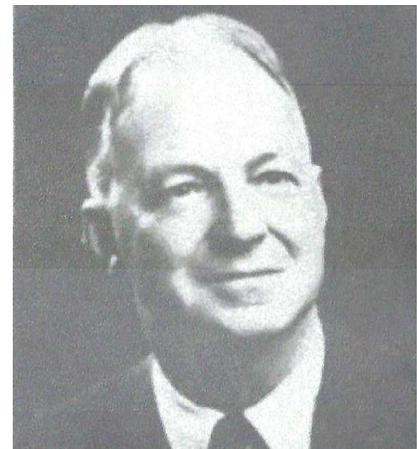
WHAT IS A COLLAGEN DISEASE? A disease that either dissolves, fails to produce, or weakens collagen in one or more organs of the body so that the organ doesn’t properly function. Without adequate collagen body tissues tear, rub against each other, and cause inflammation. Common results include arthritis, cyst formation, ruptures, neuropathies, fibromyalgia, and herniated discs.

HISTORY: Dr. Alvin F. Coburn first coined the term “collagen disease” in 1932. He discovered that streptococcal pharyngitis (e.g., strep throat) can cause an autoimmune response that damaged the collagen in the heart. The heart condition became known as rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease as valves would collapse due to collagen weakness. Dr. Coburn is memorialized for determining that an infectious agent can produce an autoimmune process that damages collagen. Recently it has been shown that the Epstein-Barr Virus (EBV) may cause multiple sclerosis, and we now believe that AA may also result from EBV. In the last century, the diseases of rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus, and scleroderma were originally called collagen diseases, but later, they became known as “autoimmune diseases.” Today, Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome of which there are about a dozen subtypes is the best-known genetic collagen disease.

TWO KINDS OF COLLAGEN DISEASES THAT CAUSE AA:

- 1. Genetic: usually hypermobile Ehlers-Danlos with elevated Beighton Score.**
- 2. Acquired: usually after an Epstein-Barr or other severe viral infection.**

NOTE: Many persons with AA don’t know they have a collagen disease.



**Alvin F. Coburn, 1899-1975
Discovered that an infection
may cause autoimmunity and a
collagen disease.**

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