

HOW THE EPSTEIN BARR VIRUS (EBV) CAUSES ADHESIVE ARACHNOIDITIS

EBV has long been known to cause autoimmune complications. For example, the author of this bulletin described glomerulonephritis (kidney) with EBV in 1969, some 53 years ago. Recently EBV has been shown to cause multiple sclerosis (MS) as well as certain cancers. Our studies have revealed that many, if not the majority, of persons with AA have extremely high EBV antibody levels. We now believe that EBV can cause AA as well as MS.

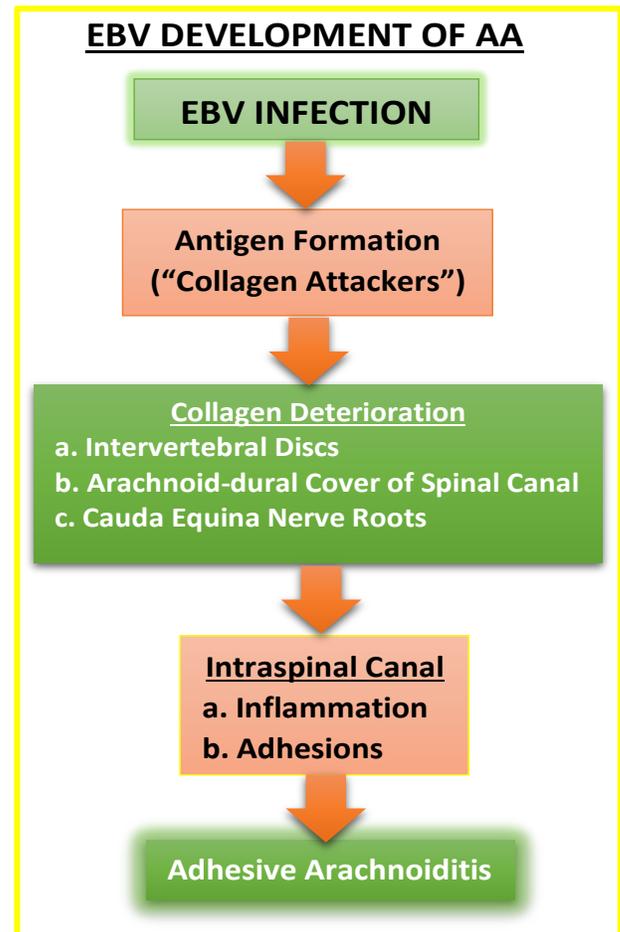
ANTIGEN (“COLLAGEN EATERS”) DEVELOPMENT: Although almost everyone gets infected with EBV during their lifetime, some persons develop a large number of EBV antigens that literally attack and “eat away” or otherwise cause collagen to deteriorate and weaken. If the body creates large numbers of antigens, large numbers of antibodies are simultaneously made to hopefully counter them.

CO-PARTNERS AND CO-FACTORS: Anything that boosts or helps a disorder to develop, is called a “co-factor.” In the case of EBV and AA, the “co-factors” or “co-partners” may include Ehlers-Danlos Syndromes, autoimmune diseases such as psoriasis, Lyme disease, and some other viruses like cytomegalus, coxsackie, and covid.

TARGET TISSUES: EBV “collagen eating” antigens like to attack tissues around the spine that have a lot of collagen. This includes intervertebral discs, cauda equina nerve roots, and the arachnoid-dural covering of the spinal canal. If collagen is weak or absent in spinal tissues, discs may slip, inflammation may form, and fluid leaks and cysts may develop.

BLOOD TESTS: Laboratories today do three tests for EBV. One is to tell if you currently have active infection and the other two measure antibody levels to determine if you have had EBV in the past. If antibodies are considerably above normal range, it suggests you have collagen eating antigens that put you at risk to develop AA

RECOMMENDATIONS: All persons with confirmed or suspected AA should be tested for EBV antibodies.



References

1. Tennant FS Jr: The Glomerulonephritis of Infectious Mononucleosis. Texas Reports on Biology and Medicine 26:603-612, Feb 1969.
2. Bjernevik, et al. Longitudinal analysis reveals high prevalence of Epstein-Barr virus associated with multiple sclerosis. Science 2022 [Dol:10.1126/science.abj8222](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abj8222).
3. Harrow T. Epstein-Barr virus could be a cause of multiple autoimmune disorders. VA Research Currents April 18, 2018.

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