



ADHESIVE ARACHNOIDITIS Bulletin 1

ADHESIVE ARACHNOIDITIS (AA) IS NO LONGER A RARE DISEASE

AA has long been classified as a rare disease. This label is no longer applicable. Patients with AA are being identified in practically every community and medical practice.

JUST HOW COMMON?

Although the precise incidence (new cases) and prevalence (known cases) are unknown, we have been able to estimate a prevalence range. Between 2000 and 2007 the total number of adults in the USA with chronic back pain increased 64% from 7.8 to 12.8 million. A conservative estimate is that at least 25% of chronic back pain patients have AA which translates to between 1.75 to 2.75 million adults.

AA IS INCREASING

As the number of persons with chronic back pain increases, the number of persons with AA will follow, because AA is always preceded by other painful, inflammatory diseases, particularly herniated intervertebral discs. Other preceding disorders include osteoporosis, osteoarthritis of vertebrae, rheumatoid spondylitis, and scoliosis.

CAUSE OF INCREASING CHRONIC BACK PAIN

A number of condition or factors have been identified that have and are continuing to cause chronic back pain. Included are obesity, sedentary life style, diabetes, lack of exercise, bucket seats, longer lifespan, increased survival after accidents.

CONTRAST MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING (MRI)

The new technology of MRI can clearly contrast intraspinal fluid flow from solid tissue including individual cauda equina nerve roots. This advance is allowing a specific diagnosis of AA and accounts for an unknown, but clearly present, number of identified cases in the general population.

Reference: Freburg, et al. The rising prevalence of chronic lower back pain. Arch Intern Med 2009;169:251-258.