



**IS ADHESIVE ARACHNOIDITIS (AA)**  
**THE WORST PAIN?**

In the 1970's when I started treating intractable pain my first cases were the bone pain of metastatic cancer, usually melanoma, breast, or prostate. In those days chemotherapy and radiation were just "hopes" so management with opioids was essential. Interestingly, another group of patients were post-polio neuropathies – not unlike the neuropathies of HIV and Covid. A 3<sup>rd</sup> group were adhesive arachnoiditis (AA) caused by the toxic dyes (i.e., myodil, etc.) used in myelograms. Clinically, the patients with AA had as severe pain as the bone cancer pain patients. This was a revolutionary finding since, in those days, metastatic bone cancer pain was believed to be the "worst" pain imaginable.

**The Sad History of AA:** I discovered that in the 1800's AA was often called the "devil's disease." Once acquired there was no treatment, so persons afflicted suffered the severest of pain, debilitation, wasting, a bed bound state, and premature death.

**Today's Hidden Pain Problems:** Today, most pain patients are dumped into a waste basket with only the diagnosis of "pain patient" and given some assembly line symptomatic treatment. Few pain clinics even attempt to determine the underlying cause of pain. Fibromyalgia is treated the same as AA or pudendal neuropathy. Dosages of opioids and other pain relievers are based on a pain scale rather than determination as to the underlying disease. This sorry state has led to such happenings as some doctors feel they will be prosecuted if they prescribe even low potency Norco for AA or CRPS. Another unintended consequence is that many parties now view a "pain patient" as an addict or opioid use disorder.

**Reason AA is so Painful:** Pain will occur in a nerve that is damaged and prohibits the normal flow of bioelectricity. Consequently, bioelectricity will accumulate around the nerve damage. The cauda equina nerve roots are major carriers of bioelectricity. When they are damaged, clumped, or scared, there is substantial accumulation of bioelectricity and pain is profound. To keep bioelectricity and pain under control in AA, one needs a combination of medical and physical measures to prevent bioelectricity from accumulating.

**Table of Common Worst Pain Diseases**

Adhesive Arachnoiditis  
Pudendal Neuropathy  
Small Fiber Neuropathy  
Degenerative Arthritis/Late Stage  
Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS)  
Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (EDS) w/multiple pain conditions