

To:
The President and Congress of the United States of America,
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,
U.S. National Institutes of Health, and
U.S. Centers for Disease Control

Subject: Use the Canadian criteria 2003 for CFS in the USA
Date: June 22, 2008

Dear Sirs,

I, the undersigned, respectfully request that the United States health agencies adopt the international (Canadian) "Consensus Document" for the diagnosis and treatment of the disease therein named Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, or "ME/CFS".
http://www.mefmaction.net/documents/me_overview.pdf

I have personal experience of the diluted CDC 1994 (Fukuda) definition of CFS. Many years ago in the beginning of having CFS I read the CDC criteria, but it did not say much to me. I thought that I could have this, but also that anybody could have it. It was years later when I read the Canadian criteria 2003, that I really understood that this is what I have. The Canadian criteria clearly described the disease that I have.

The CDC 1994 definition does not have "post exertional malaise exceeding 24 hours after mental or physical exertion" as a mandatory criteria which I think is a strong weakness. Post exertional malaise exceeding 24 hours after mental or physical exertion, is a sheet anchor for a diagnosis of ME/CFS. The CDC 1994 definition only has taken a few symptoms at random and it does not describe the disease clearly. Clinical use of the Canadian criteria, will help doctors to make a more reliable diagnosis, because it has more mandatory symptoms and have more of typical ME/CFS symptoms in its list.

In research it is important to study a homogeneous group. If the criteria is very including as the CDC 1994 criteria, it is possible that studies include patients with a broad spectrum of pathology. Not only will studies be less successful because it will be difficult to get a statistical significance if patients are inhomogeneous, but also will it be difficult to compare studies as it will be possible to select different patient populations in different studies with a criteria that is very including.

What happens in the United States of America is important to the world as it is a leading nation in medical research. I live in Sweden, and what happens in your nation also influences my country.

Please, adopt the Canadian criteria 2003 for clinical use and for research use on Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. This will make research more fruitful as well as assuring that patients get a proper diagnosis.

Yours Sincerely, Kasper Ezelius

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