

MSM / Re-sulphation; What's all that about?

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To recap from last year: This is the same group of individuals.

Case studies:

Female (45yrs)

Diagnoses:

Psoriasis - from age 7: - Repeated use of topical steroids.

Hay fever - from age 10

Depression - Late teens - early twenties

Migraines.

Constant fungal infections (thrush, cystitis, athletes foot) from age eight onwards

Fibrocystic breast disease

Menstrual problems (menorrhagia, short cycle) - Constant use of female hormones from age 15yrs.

Sub clinical - diabetes (familial)

Sub clinical - adrenal insufficiency (familial)

Sub clinical - hypothyroidism (familial)

Recent diagnoses 3 yrs:

Irlen syndrome / visual dyslexia

fibromyalgia / chronic fatigue syndrome

candidiasis.

Female (38yrs).

Long psychiatric history / ? Schizophrenia (teens)

Sub clinical - Diabetes

Sub clinical - Hypothyroidism - (familial)

Menstrual problems (amenorrhoea)

Recent diagnoses 2yrs:

Asperger syndrome

Men syndrome / visual dyslexia

candidiasis.

PHILIP (16yrs)

Born with Candida (fungal skin scales at birth - ringworm)

Poor feeder / difficult to wean.

Chronic ear & chest infections

Hyperactive / sound + light sensitive (even in utero)

Chronic nappy rash

Persistent colic

Screaming miserable sickly baby & toddler

Haphazard development of milestones.

Feingold diet - age 3 - 6yrs

Food allergy tests - cytotoxic at age 5yrs

Diagnoses:

Asperger syndrome - age 6yrs

classic autism - age 12yrs

Men syndrome / visual dyslexia - age 13yrs

candidiasis - age 13yrs

High functioning autism with dyslexia - age 14yrs

ANDREW (Age 14yrs)

Quiet, insular child. Late with milestones (walked at 2yrs, echolalic until age 5.5yrs)

Intermittent A.S. behaviours

Diagnoses:

Primary encopresis - age 7yrs

Irritable bowel syndrome - age 11yrs

Men syndrome - age 11yrs.

Candidiasis - age 11yrs

Although all presented slightly different the common denominator was the diagnoses of Men syndrome followed by Candidiasis.

Commenced GFCF diet in July 1999 followed by the Erica White approach to Candida treatment in the new year of 2000. We struggled severe die off symptoms for over a year and didn't feel we were improving any significant so decided to look at another option. That option was MSM. Information was gathered from the almsm.co.uk website, Kirkman Labs website and the Jacobs, Lawrence and Zucker book "The miracle of msm".

Msm is reported to be effective in the following conditions:-

- Degenerative arthritis
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Chronic headaches / fuzzy head
- Muscle pain
- Fibromyalgia
- Tendonitis and Bursitis
- Carpel Tunnel Syndrome
- Temporo-Mandibular joint syndrome
- Post-Traumatic pain and inflammation
- Heartburn and Hyperacidity
- Dental pain
- Allergies - Pollen, food
- Asthma
- Sinusitis
- Lupus
- Interstitial Cystitis
- Schleroderma
- Constipation / diarrhoea
- Fatigue
- Scar Tissue
- Skin, Hair and Nails

This product looked like a dream come true for all of us. So in September 2001 we commenced our msm supplementation. Finding no information regarding dosage specific to ASD individuals we embarked on the almsm.co.uk protocol

Protocol:

We initially experienced a severe die off/ detox reaction which normally abates after about ten days so we carried on. The protocol states that you take as much / little as you need stopping at the point where the msm makes you feel well. Its difficult to know what

"being well" feels like when you've never had it so we carried on. By the time we were into the programme we had well gone past the stage where we lost the plot. At the end of three months we were faced with this:-

OCD / Disorientation / confusion

Visual fragmentation

Light sensitivity

Weakness

Nausea / Abdo discomfort / vomiting / appetite loss

Muscle aches / Joint pains

Headache / drowsiness

Yellow floaty stools

Dark urine

Jaundice

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} Hepatitis without the fever

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Thyroid swelling (raised TSH)

Initially we thought we couldn't metabolise msm and therefore discontinued it but very quickly noticed the pinch of lack of msm.

Disorientation / confusion / drunkenness

Visual fragmentation

Light sensitivity

Weakness

Nausea / Abdo discomfort / vomiting / appetite loss

Muscle aches / Joint pains

Headache / drowsiness

Yellow floaty stools

Dark urine

Jaundice

restricted diet (rice and peas)

inability to tolerate salicylates and high GI foods

inability to tolerate sulphur foods - chickpeas, lentils altho craving them at the same time.

Dysglycaemia??? (Needs blood sugar to be 4.5-5.5. Very sensitive to anything outside this range.

The strange thing was that whilst all this looked negative there was something good going on because we had a good period in the middle of the protocol, and a few good days after we discontinued the msm. During this phase we were more mobile, had no inflammation, none of the above symptoms, but above all optimum cognitive functioning (clear head, positive outlook). Realising we had overdone the dose we went back to the drawing board, picked the brains of people like Michael Ash, Jacquelyn McCandless, Patrick

Holford and Rosemary Waring. General consensus in those who support its use gave us an autism friendly dose of 160mgs.

This time the initial die off did last ten to fourteen days

Symptoms of die off:

Gastrointestinal system:

Sore mouth and throat

Oral thrush / blisters

Teeth spongy and "loose" (? Abscesses) / bleeding gums - worse after teeth brushing

Heavy gut - Either overeat due to muscle relaxant properties of msm or can't eat due to muscle spasm.

Slow peristalsis (constipation???) Soft stools but no "pushing" power. (5 days)

Bloating / trapped wind. (Day 5 to 21)

Gradual return to normal / possibly diarrhoea.

Anal irritation

Neurological system:

Vision blurred and fragmented

Confusion / possible OCD

Dizziness / loss of balance (water on the brain)

"Spaced / drunk feeling" and being aware of that (Candida toxins - alcohol - dissolve fatty acids within the brain and displaces DHA with poor substitute. Also blocks conversion of fats to DHA and prostaglandin's (Holford 2003)

Irrational thinking and loss of the plot

Poor STM

Lost messages - hunger / satiety , bowels (urges + no result / no urge / sudden overwhelming urge, urinary (full bladder but no message / opening of sphincter muscle, night time incontinence)

Night time pins and needles / cramps (depletion of B6, calcium and magnesium)

Increased hypersensitivity - light (depleted B2), sound, tactile, smell.

Vivid dreams / no dream recall.(depleted B6)

Deep sleep / insomnia.

Musculoskeletal:

Heavy painful limbs

Toxic inflamed muscles - pain and knots, stiff muscles and joints alternating with dyspraxia (too much mobility / lack of co-ordination).

Sore neck muscles

Pain in any old injuries / well used joints

Poor muscle control (dyspraxia / stiffness)

Muscle twitching.

Endocrine:

Thyroid: Temp persistently < 35.5

Swollen thyroid gland TSH >36

Icy hands and feet / Raynauds

Demarcation at wrists (red hands)

Lethargy

Dry flaky skin and hair loss

Bradycardia (around 50bpm)

Fluid retention (abdomen and legs)

Adrenal imbalance:

(Excessive adrenaline)

Irritability / nervousness + anxiety

Extreme fears

Palpitations

Insomnia

Cold hands and feet

Restlessness

(Insufficiency)

Depression
Poor concentration
Short attention span
No drive / motivation
Frequently tired
Rarely completes a task (boys)
Can't deal with stress
Socially withdrawn

Pancreas:

Poor blood sugar control
Later very sensitive if not between 4.5 - 5.5 mmols (normal 3-6)
< 4.5 = hypo (Shakes, hunger, visual difficulties)
> 5.5 = hyper (visual fragmentation / blurring, poor concentration, "heady/hangover")

Cardiovascular / Thoracic systems:

Palpitations (usually when just commencing or coming off msm)
Bradycardia
Hypotension (75/40) - ? adrenal, ?musculoskeletal. Prominent saggy veins!
Tight chest / panic attacks (? Linked to adrenal stress)
Nasal congestion / post nasal drip

Reproductive system:

Hormone imbalance / irregular menstrual cycle.
Vaginal burning / itching / discharge.
Dismenorrhoea / menorhagia
Fybrocystic breast tissue

General:

Increased food intolerance (Janie and I restricted to whole grain rice, some green vegetables and fish).

Exacerbation of psoriasis (followed by major improvement)

Athletes foot / fungal toenails.

Spotty skin.

Soft splintered nails.

Easy bruising,

Excessive sweating and body odour, health symptoms worse after eating = Detoxification overload **Liver under strain!**

After two to three weeks of any combination of these symptoms we had a period of incredible cognitive functioning, good visual perception and an increase in energy / immunity. Better hair & skin and nails that finally grew without splitting. This was evident for about seven months then suddenly we became toxic again.

Despite feeling like this during the good phase we were able to eat a wider variety of foods and stand in a field of rape seed without suffering the previous SOB / hay fever type reactions. We were also free of viral type insults from those around us. This time we discontinued the msm for seven weeks. As I said before it is extremely difficult to pin point the exact time we should re- introduce msm as the symptoms of too much and too little are almost identical. I think when we come off it we have a confusing problem. On the one hand we had excretion of the excess toxins, On the other we had Candida taking advantage during a period it could thrive. We obviously didn't want to continue in a phase of constant liver insult or continually peaking and troughing in this manner as that becomes controlling in itself. We therefore decided that we would play completely safe this time and start at the lowest reasonable dose we could reliably measure. That dose was a mere 10mgs. We have been on that dose for about six months now. Initial die off was much less severe and came at the one month mark rather than immediately.

Initial die off:

Sore neck and shoulder muscles

Sore head / neuralgia

Bleeding gums on teeth brushing

Stomach / Low gut cramps

Diarrhoea / constipation (5 days or so) followed by normal stools

Spaced / drunken feeling (can be rescued with extra EPA) **IMPORTANT FINDING ***

Heady / hangover feeling

Heavy legs and arms

Sore joints / muscles

General tiredness

Dry flaky skin / exacerbation of psoriasis / excema. Later major improvement

It took about three weeks to see the positive effects of the MSM on this low dose but according to Balch and Balch effects can be seen anywhere from 2 days to a month. By the end of the month eating was more enjoyable and less traumatic. We were left with the much milder symptoms of die off that could be accommodated without causing too many problems.

Balance:

It became obvious at this stage how important it was to keep the balance where sulphur foods were concerned. As we have embarked on a GFCF, yeast and sugar free and low salicylate diet this is naturally high in sulphur. Also the optimum nutrition approach supports the immune system. These factors alone cause die off of any bacteria yeast, parasites that shouldn't be there. Any excess of sulphur for us can tip the balance in favour of liver overload temporarily. According to Susan Cousins Candida toxins block the phase two detox pathways - the very thing we are trying to correct here. This means we need to think carefully about what we eat and in what proportions, balancing sulphur foods (lentils, chickpeas, garlic, eggs, brassicas, seeds, coconut) and rotating them with oily fish. We also have to think carefully about combining high quality proteins with slow release carbohydrates to keep the glycemic index below 50. This reduces food reactions considerably enabling a wider variety of foods to be consumed.

Also the amount of physical exercise we take can also upset the balance. This one is difficult to tackle because the better we feel and the more energy we have the more we run around trying to get as many hours out of the day as possible (a completely new concept to us). As we do this the lymph system becomes more efficient at removing the toxic build up from the muscles into the bloodstream which means we get heady and spaced if we are not careful. A couple of days of racing around can create toxicity. Often a day of complete rest and plenty of water (6 litres or so) is necessary. We have really had to learn to pace ourselves.

We have also found we need to work hard to maintain bowel regularity by keeping sulphur foods within acceptable quantities to prevent constipation. If constipated the liver cannot successfully off-load the toxins. We have found Colicare / Lopicol invaluable for this along with vitamin C taken to bowel tolerance if we do overstep the mark. Optimum levels of fatty acids - particularly EPA (fish oils) are particularly beneficial here.

Why the small dose?

MSM research on people with inflammatory conditions (arthritis) who presumably follow a western diet (high salts) also take large quantities of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs for pain. MSM has to soak all that up before clearing up the inflammation.

ASD people are the exact opposite (hopefully), low salt diet. Too much MSM causes too much die off/ inflammation. Not enough creates the same situation.

Re-cap last year: We found same situation with L-Glutamine (standard dose 5gms, most ASD people can't cope with more than 2gms).

Donna W. Found the same with respiradone (1/17 regular dose has given her back her life)

Important considerations:

If you are going to do this most important factor is **Optimum Nutrition**. Candida toxins deplete most of the vitamins and minerals we need to sustain a good quality of life.

Vit c needed to reduce adverse reactions (mops up the toxins before they reach the muscles), to prevent constipation. ION people advocate vit c taken to bowel tolerance levels.

Antioxidants to balance up with vit c and help mop up

B Complex reduce symptoms in all systems.

Fatty Acids (fish oils) EPA, GLA to reduce inflammation, regulate the hormones, help mop up and safeguard the brain. Problem with fish oils - mercury content. However, DMSO from which msm is derived is a known chelator of mercury and heavy metals so I'm hoping that's enough to combat any potential problems there. Research shows that we find it extremely difficult to convert the fatty acids from flax into useable form. Flax for us is one seed we have to avoid if we don't want chronic diarrhoea.

Liver support (Liv 243, Milk Thistle) Liv 243 detoxifies liver / diuretic. Milk Thistle helps liver cells regenerate.

Above all Don't do this alone unless you know what you are doing. See a good nutrition consultant. I have found ION people are the most knowledgeable / willing to work hard to achieve the optimum. Holford's team have just opened the Brain Bio Centre in London. Pay a one off fee on the condition that you stay with them for a minimum of six months.

Downside: Cost!

One off fee = £1500

Supplements = ??? £100 per month.

Worth every penny.

References:

Holford, P. (2003) Optimum Nutrition for the mind. Piatkis

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The miracle of msm.

(2003)Children with Starving Brains. Bramble

Balch & Balch (2000) Prescription for Nutritional Healing

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The Mental Health Project www.metalhealthproject.com or fax 020 8874 5003