

## **CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME IS AN ORGANIC DISEASE AND SHOULD BE TREATED BY NEUROLOGISTS**

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Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) is defined by severe fatigue of at least 6 months' duration, that interferes substantially with occupational, educational, social, or personal activities, is not alleviated by rest, and is accompanied by at least four of eight specific symptoms (unrefreshing sleep, sore throat, tender lymph nodes, muscle pain, joint pain, impaired memory or concentration, headache, severe post-exertional fatigue). Although much research has been done, no general agreement has been reached about the causes of the illness. Interestingly from a neurological point of view, recent studies have detected a decrease in cortical grey matter volume in patients with CFS as compared with controls. In addition, following cognitive behavioural therapy an increase was found of the grey matter volume, especially of the lateral prefrontal cortex.<sup>1,2</sup> However, it is unclear whether these changes in grey matter volume constitute a cause or a consequence of the disease. Further, a diminished central drive during maximal fatiguing contractions was found in CFS patients.<sup>3</sup> The neurologist is often confronted with patients suffering from fatigue. It is vital to recognize the condition and perform a thorough work-up.<sup>4</sup> Many neurological conditions are present in the differential diagnosis and can mimic the disease, the classic example is multiple sclerosis.<sup>5</sup> The only evidence-based and effective treatment so far, is cognitive behavioural therapy.<sup>6</sup>

### References

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