

THE “EMPTY SAC” SIGN – WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Since the MRI was invented in the late 1980’s, a few physicians have observed that some persons with AA have a dilated, lower lumbar-sacral spinal canal without the visible appearance of cauda equina nerve roots. Physicians have for ages referred to the lumbar-sacral spinal canal as the “thecal sac” since it only contains nerve roots and no spinal cord. Until now, the meaning of this sign on MRI wasn’t known. Now, however this sign is understood, and its presence is a call for immediate, aggressive action by the person who has the sign.

CAUSE OF THE SIGN: Inflammation and adhesions have glued, many, if not all the cauda equina nerve roots, to the inside wall of the spinal canal covering. The spinal canal covering becomes inflamed, loses its tensile strength, and becomes flabby, soft, and dilated. Spinal fluid pools at the bottom portion of the spinal canal.

CONSEQUENCES AND SYMPTOMS:

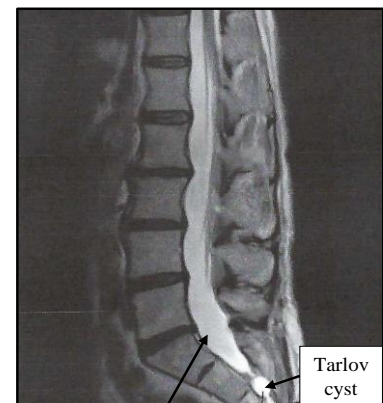
- ✓ Seepage of spinal fluid through canal cover
- ✓ Pooling and stasis of spinal fluid resulting in eye, ear, and nose symptoms since fluid flow is impeded
- ✓ Dizziness, poor balance
- ✓ Pain when sitting
- ✓ Urinary, intestine, and sexual dysfunction
- ✓ Progressive severe pain

TREATMENT:

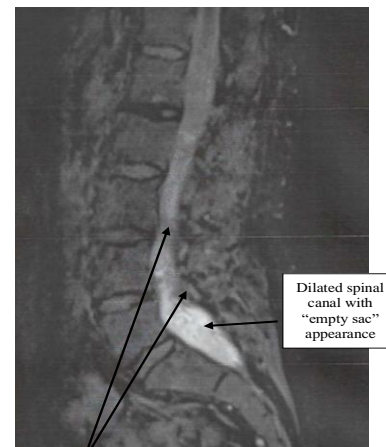
- ✓ Aggressive 3-component treatment protocol
 1. Suppress inflammation
 2. Promote tissue regeneration
 3. Pain relief
- ✓ Trials with laser or pulsed electromagnetic therapy
- ✓ Spinal fluid flow exercises (rocking chair, walking with arms swinging, trampoline walking)
- ✓ Trial with acetazolamide



Normal Spinal Canal



Dilated or “empty sac”



Fibrous masses of nerve roots

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