CYTOKINE PANEL – NEW TEST TO GUIDE AA TREATMENT

AA is an inflammatory disease of the lower spinal canal. Treatment of AA requires aggressive measures to suppress inflammation that involves the cauda equina, arachnoid-dural covering of the spinal canal, and intervertebral discs. A new sophisticated blood test detects and measures the amounts of specific molecules that cause inflammation. They are called cytokines. This test is now deemed critical as it tells the patient, family, and medical practitioner if inflammation is out-of-control and needs immediate measures to suppress it.

FACTS ABOUT AA INFLAMMATION

- ✓ It has exacerbations and remissions (i.e., "waxes and wanes").
- ✓ It may not "burn out" but remain a lifetime. Continuous suppression is necessary to prevent tissue deterioration and pain.
- ✓ Unless adequately suppressed pain will continue and progressively worsen as inflammation entraps and destroys more and more nerve tissue.
- ✓ Anti-inflammatory agents that work on joints and muscle may not be effective on AA since the inflammation is inside the spinal canal.
- ✓ Ketorolac and/or the corticosteroids, methylprednisolone or dexamethasone, may be required to suppress inflammation.

WHAT IS A CTOKINE? They are small molecules which are activated by trauma, chemical toxins, or autoimmunity and which cause inflammation, tissue damage, and pain.

THE CYTOKINE PANEL: Medical practice has long relied on two blood tests to determine if inflammation is present – the ESR and CRP which are crude tests which don't show low levels of inflammation. Cytokine panels are now available in every community and laboratory and can be ordered by any medical practitioner.

OUR RECOMMENDATION: Every person with MRI-documented AA should have a blood test for ESR, CRP, and the cytokine panel. If any elevations are present a more potent spinal canal anti-inflammatory program consisting of diet, dietary supplements, and medications needs to be implemented.