Multiple Sclerosis 2 Essay, Research Paper

Multiple Sclerosis is a disease in which areas of the brain, spinal cord, and peripheral nerves are stripped of their myelin, which is the fat covering that insulates the nerve fibers. This makes it harder for the transmission of messages between the central nervous system and the rest of the body. Multiple sclerosis is a disease that affects about one million people worldwide but is more common in women.

The symptoms of Multiple Sclerosis are varied in range, severity, and duration. The most common symptoms are optic neuritis. With these symptoms patients experience red-green colorblindness, muscle weakness, fatigue, loss of balance, spasms, or paralysis. In some instances even numbness, sensitivity to heat, mild attention deficits, or memory loss, and depression are some of the other symptoms that are experienced. It is difficult to diagnose Multiple Sclerosis, because the way the chemicals show up in tests are similar to those of other disorders. There is not a single test that can definitely detect Multiple Sclerosis.

The risk of inheriting this disorder if another family member has it already is 300:1 if you are monozygoatal twins, and the risk is 20:1 through 40:1 if it is a single pregnancy. Scientist have also determined that most of the time, if one identical twin gets Multiple Sclerosis, the other twin is less likely to get stricken with the disease.

Scientists have different theories on the cause of Multiple Sclerosis. Some scientists have noticed the genetic relationship of families stricken by this disease. But on the other hand they are exploring the possibility that the environment might have an effect. They have not proven the theories, but scientists are toying with the idea that if monozygoat twins are separated at birth and put into two different environments, their chances of getting Multiple Sclerosis are altered. Moving from place to place during childhood is another factor that is being viewed as another strong indicator for this disease.

Children with only one parent in common have not had extensive research done, to give answers to baffled patients and parents. In various clinics across Canada one test was performed where they studied 939 half-siblings, which were admitted to the clinics with Multiple Sclerosis. Scientists believe that people with European decent were more likely to have this disorder. They did extensive research and questioned all patients in detail. The question that mostly interested the scientists was the length the children spent in a common environment or how long they have lived in the same family unit with their siblings. The patients were categorized into two groups when the study was performed; (I) Those who lived together for at least one year before age fifteen; (IIa) Half siblings who visited occasionally (less than one a year on average) or (IIb) Half siblings who only knew of each other, but had never met before age fifteen.

After the information was collected and evaluated the results were as follows: The ratio of men: women is roughly 1: 2, regardless of half and full siblings. The researchers found no conclusive proof that parental factors influence or even change the risk of Multiple Sclerosis, and that the results between full and half brothers or sisters was insignificant. Not only was this theory inconclusive but there was no evidence that the environment had an effect on contracting Multiple Sclerosis. The result was that the risk of contracting the disease was even higher when siblings were raised apart than those raised together but these findings were considered merely a coincidence. Therefore the evidence leads us to believe that the environment does not play a role in contracting MS.

After all this research in finding the cause for this complex disorder all evidence leads us to believe that Multiple Sclerosis is a genetic disease, but there still needs to be a lot more research done before we can be sure where it comes from. This information will help us find a cure for Multiple Sclerosis.

The article was very informative but shows me that there is no conclusive evidence what causes Multiple Sclerosis and who is more likely to be affected. More than a million people have been diagnosed with MS but there are very few leads on how to prevent treat or cure. This is only the beginning of the research and a lot has to be done in the future. The information was clearer after I read the article more than once. The research method seems legitimate but they have not proven the causes of MS.