

Astonishing treatment found for MS

Chloe and Agota – Thursday 16 March 2017

Scientists have found a new treatment that can prevent any symptoms of Multiple Sclerosis, a disease that affects over one hundred thousand people in the UK. Multiple Sclerosis is a disease that causes numbness, tingling in the fingers and sufferers may struggle to walk or think clearly. It can also leave patients in a wheelchair for life. MS is mainly seen in women, though scientists don't know why.

MS is caused by fibres in the brain and spinal cord, known as myelin, that become damaged; the immune system mistakenly attacks the myelin causing scarring or sclerosis. This damage can disrupt the nerve signals causing permanent neurodegeneration, if not treated in time.

The treatment is a stem cell transplant and a course of chemotherapy. The therapy is to burn out the old damaged immune system so that your new stem cells are sampled and then brought back into your immune system over time, which will hopefully not have any faults of the old one. This treatment is very aggressive and dangerous: 80% who have had the treatment have seen a positive change, though more than 50% saw the progression halted overtime. The NHS and Watchdog have described this treatment as experimental, and few patients have died from it, but multiple sclerosis is incurable, meaning most patients will try it if they wanted to.

Dr Aisling McMahon, the head of clinical trials at the MS society said how this is “really big news” for patients with the primary progression, a form of MS. “It’s the first time a treatment has shown a potential to reduce disability in multiple sclerosis-which offers a lot for the future,” she said. Also Professor Basil Sharrack said that since they started treating their patients, some of the results have been miraculous. “This is a word I would not use lightly, but we have found profound improvements.”

A man called Steven was once a marathon runner and then he was completely paralysed in a wheelchair, because of MS. Before treatment he said: “I couldn't even flicker a muscle.” Nine days after the treatment, he could move his toe and after ten months he managed to swim along a Lake in Cumbria for a whole mile. Then after lots of therapy, he also managed to ride a bike and also walk for the first time again. “It was great. I felt I was back,” he said. Other patients have also seen amazing changes after only a few days of the stem cell transplant. “It was a miracle,” say doctors.