Med Hypotheses. 2013 Sep;81(3):506-8. doi: 10.1016/j.mehy.2013.06.023. Epub 2013 Jul 11.

Allostatic overload in myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS).

Arroll MA1.

Author information

Abstract

Myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS) is a debilitating condition characterised by diverse symptoms such as fatigue, pain, sleep disturbance and autonomic dysfunction. There remains to be a singular biomarker identified for this illness, hence numerous theories about its development and perpetuation have been posited in the literature. This brief report presents the model of 'allostasis' as a framework for understanding ME/CFS, specifically the notion that the physiological mechanisms employed in the body to deal with stress termed here as 'allostatic states' (e.g. elevation of inflammatory cytokines), may in and of themselves contribute to the perpetuation of the disorder. This theoretical assertion has important consequences for the understanding of ME/CFS and treatment; rather than searching for a singular pathogen responsible for this condition, ME/CFS can be conceptualised as a maladaptive stress disorde