**Another Jewish Genetic Disease – This One Affects Adults**

Jewish adults of Ashkenazi ancestry need to learn their medical risks. 1 in 48 carries at least one of two genetic mutations associated with an elusive, life-changing disease that devastates the nervous system during one’s adult years.

Seasoned diagnostic professionals almost always miss the connection of seemingly unrelated symptoms: tingling or numb toes and feet, bladder dysfunction, diminished energy, and Jewish ancestry. At first, patients say, the changes are hardly noticeable. But then the symptoms ramp up. Ultimately, the disease causes foot dragging and stumbling, paralysis of the legs, loss of bladder and bowel control, pronounced fatigue, and – in about half of those diagnosed – cognitive losses. No wonder MS, ALS, prostate disease, or some form of nerve damage are the most common misdiagnoses.

Most physicians have never heard of the disease known by its initials, APBD, and they certainly don’t know that a simple saliva test will nail a diagnosis. Instead, the patients often are prescribed medications that don’t help, endure surgeries that don’t work, and experience the frustration of searching for years for a correct diagnosis. All the while, they become increasingly debilitated. Less than 200 APBD patients have been diagnosed worldwide.

According to Gregory Weiss, President of the APBD Research Foundation in New York City, “Statistics tell us there are thousands out there with APBD who don’t know it.”

Jewish adults in their 30’s, 40’s and 50’s need to learn the early, hallmark signs and symptoms of APBD. The APBD Research Foundation developed a memory tool to help them. It’s based on the initials of the disease:

A – Adult man or woman of Ashkenazi Jewish ancestry; Age 30-50 at onset of symptoms

P – Peripheral neuropathy (tingling or numbness) in toes, feet, fingers, hands

B – Bladder dysfunction

D – Diminished energy. This last symptom has variable timing. It can set in somewhat later in the disease process, too.

Anyone who thinks they might have APBD should talk to their health care professional about the possibility. More information about it can be found at the website [www.APBDRF.org](http://www.APBDRF.org)

At the present time, no cure or treatment has been identified, but several promising approaches are on the horizon. It’s important that patients be identified now so they can participate as clinical trials open up.

For testing information:

website, www.APBDRF.org

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