

My ES Story

by 'Anna O.'

I need to start at the beginning because I feel it is all relevant to my story. I was born in 1961 after a traumatic 48 hour labour (and hypothyroid mother?) and finally forceps during a general anaesthetic. Apart from the first few weeks, I was a typical 60's bottle-fed baby, sleeping all night from very early on. I was the eldest of three girls and had all the usual vaccinations and childhood illnesses. We were brought up in the country on a farm in Sussex, having a healthy, happy, active childhood in a secure and loving family.

From my mid teens onwards I lacked concentration, energy and had, to a degree, an inability to absorb and retain information. It took a while before I realised I did not have the same stamina as my peers. I was unable to finish my Bronze Swimming Medal and could not run far in athletics. I was always cold during outdoor activities in winter. Coordination was not very good either - I was last to be picked for the netball team!

I left school and began nurse training in 1979, opting for SEN, since academically I did not feel up to doing the SRN training. I married in 1980 and nursed until 1993, having three children during this time, after which the physical and mental demands of this work with a young family became too much for me.

In 1990 I had a course Hepatitis B vaccines. I was unaware until recently that it was this that probably had a devastating effect on my health. It was also at this time I had my third child Justine and I have always believed that the pregnancy must have been the trigger. We also had a car accident in 1990 which gave me whiplash for which I saw various osteopaths for treatment.

It was at this time I started to notice that pain and stiffness had developed in both arms around the elbow joints. This made carrying bags of heavy shopping almost impossible. Other symptoms appeared, such as fatigue, muscle and joint pain (mainly upper body), debilitating headaches, itchy and dry skin, allergies and sensitivities, food intolerances, low/falling blood pressure, stinging eyes, constantly feeling cold, IBS, heavy and painful menstrual bleeding and short cycle, light/sound sensitive, slightly blurred vision, dulled senses, feelings of unreality, urinary frequency and many more.

A few weeks after the first vaccine (I had actually just conceived my third baby though was not aware at the time) I was very ill with acute sinusitis. I had never had this before and have suffered with sinusitis for many years since. All went well with the pregnancy and delivery and the baby was fine, although she has suffered greatly from ear infections and had grommets three times and eventually a tonsilectomy.

Over the years, particularly the last eight, I have seen many specialists both within the health service and privately at great cost to ourselves. I have gained clues along the way ruling out all other possibilities. All tests have shown nothing abnormal. Except one. This was done by a highly qualified osteopath who was known also for his expertise in kinesiology. He confidently guaranteed my health problems were due to my mercury fillings and, thankfully, I followed his advice and had them removed by a mercury-free dentist in 1999, followed by chelation therapy. He told me it would take some years to recover and only 7 years later did I notice any significant change in my health.

Last year my right arm recovered. Puzzled as to why one recovered and not the other, I saw another osteopath who was also a naturopath. He treated my left arm with ultrasound, tiny electric shocks and laser light. Positive this sophisticated treatment would work, I happily went away only to find that I then developed a burning searing pain which I had never experienced before. This pain lasted for six months. He was at a loss to explain why, although little did he know this was a whole new ball game!

I began to be much more aware of what aggravated my arm and noticed it was better after a night's sleep, but hurt soon after getting up, even though I had done nothing strenuous. It also was more noticeable when I checked my emails in the mornings!

One day I just looked at my arms and wondered what was different. If anything, the right should be worse as I am right handed and the right would have more wear and tear. It didn't make sense. I then realised that I had been constantly wearing a metal watch. So I removed it but after three weeks there was no change and so, rather disappointed, (but I am used to this!) I put it back on again. The pain got worse, especially when I used the computer in the morning, whereas it had felt much better after a night's sleep with no watch on. I then removed my watch permanently and two months later the arm had recovered completely. The watch had somehow been preventing my arm from healing. Now, after 18 years, my arms are pain-free. A kinesiologist recently told me she thought it was the energy from the battery but I wonder if it also had something to do with the metal strap as well.

Now, of course, I know that I am electrosensitive and that the DECT cordless phone has been affecting me. Since throwing this away and turning off our WiFi router at night I have felt much better. I had been sleeping in the same room for a year as our WiFi pc and the phone in a vain effort to improve the quality of my sleep!!

Our 9 year old labrador also has been a different dog. Her depression and stiffness are gone, she is behaving like a young dog again and her coat is lovely. I am convinced it was affecting her also. No-one can argue that this effect is psychosomatic!

Also, when in front of the computer, I have been getting a tingling sensation on my right shoulder for a few years. It is always in the same place and I never get it at any other time and sometimes I feel quite sick too. Recently I developed a metallic taste in my mouth. This gets worse after a few minutes on the phone, computer, in the car, or when under fluorescent lighting. These lights are a big problem for me and make me feel very lightheaded and give me feelings of unreality within about few minutes; sometimes I feel nauseous too. Spending more than a few minutes in large departments stores and supermarkets is not pleasant. I am almost certain now that our new lap-top triggered the metallic taste and since greatly restricting pc use and having nutritional supplementation, this has improved.

Travelling in the car affects me and after about 45 minutes I start to feel slightly unwell. I never drive on motorways or long journeys for this reason. I have been driving for over 26 years and know my limitations well. I also find this is worse in my husband's modern company car than my basic old Skoda.

I have no skin rashes, do not suffer from eczema, asthma or hayfever, yet I know I have allergies to dust mites, and pollen. After a few minutes of wearing my metal-framed glasses my eyes sting, but this eases quite quickly when I remove them. I was told at my opticians that this was likely to be the metal frames which contain nickel. I have also noticed this is worse in front of the computer. Nickel is another metal which my osteopath told me I was sensitive to. I now wear only plastic frames.

Since 1993 I have only worked part-time in jobs that are not too demanding. I have to pace myself carefully. If I overdo it or eat things I should not, it takes me some time to get back to normal - whatever that is!

I cannot take many of the supplements I need as I get ectopic heart beats if I am not careful. These I now know are chemically/electrically induced and not caused by stress. Stress makes this condition worse but it is not the cause and it is highly offensive to be told this.

The menopause, which has not even started yet, has also often been blamed for my symptoms for the last ten years years. This assumed cause, too, is also extremely frustrating. And it could not be said to a man, so it is rather discriminating!

I have gone to great lengths to get myself well over all this time and most things I have tried have had no or little effect. EMR and everyday chemicals have been there all the time, leeching my energies and preventing me from getting well. I should also add that one doctor I saw some years ago, who was actually my GP at the time, told me to increase my intake of salt significantly because my blood pressure was low. Since I could see the logic, I tried this. The muscle pain became much worse. Since salt is an electrical conductor this possibly would not have been a very good idea – but I am no scientist!!!

The total hopelessness I felt last year on the day a doctor kindly told me I had to learn to accept that I was 'not very robust' and that there was nothing else it could be, was enough to make it cross my mind briefly that I did not want to live like this any longer. I picked myself up again and in January 2007 wrote in desperation to the British Society for Ecological Medicine and got a letter of diagnosis back from Dr Sarah Myhill. She has been a wonderful support to me since..This pointed me in the right direction and, after further research of my own, I now have a very good understanding of what is wrong. By acting on this knowledge, many of my symptoms are either gone or subsiding.

In April 2007 I learned from Glaxo, via my GP practice nurse, that the vaccines I had in 1990 (and no doubt many others) contained Thiomersal (mercury) which would, I am sure, have been total overload to an already weakened immune system. Glaxo have even admitted that this could have sensitised me. I have no doubt now that this was the trigger. One major point, however, is the fact that I worked as a nurse in a hospital dental unit for 5 years prior to this, having lots of contact with mercury, so I could have been 'sensitised' anyway. Any sceptics should watch the film made by the International Academy for Oral Medicine and Toxicology, *Smoking Teeth*. This actually shows the harmful mercury vapour coming from mercury fillings and how it affects every organ of the body. It crosses the placenta and also affects the unborn foetus. Most people seem to cope with this but it is now known that a small percentage do not. It seems that little or no research has been done on this sub-group of the population. Interestingly, once it was known this research was onto something, funding was drastically cut.

I believe I was born with a damaged immune system, possibly due to my own mother's mercury fillings. Don't they now say pregnant women should not eat peanuts, as it can sensitise the baby? Surely mercury poisoning is the same but worse. I also have good reason to believe that my mother was deficient in iodine causing her to be hypothyroid at this time, perhaps making her unborn children seceptible to auto-immune type disease.

Much of my time and energy in recent months has been spent in trying to raise awareness among the public, professionals and the government. I have been to see my MP. I have the support of many professional people. Recently I have met another ex-dental nurse who is campaigning in the UK for recognition of mercury-exposed personnel. A nurse in Norway has just succeeded in this there.

Recently (and very worryingly!) I have learnt that there is a global epidemic of iodine deficiency. I also know that routine blood test often miss 'subclinical hypothyroidism'. Since I have had very clear symptoms of hypothyroidism since my teens (I am now 46), I strongly suspect that this has been the problem with my own history, my family's and some mysteries about my own children's health. Aged 20 I even went to my GP saying I thought that I had a problem with a underactive thyroid. Needless to say, I was laughed out of the surgery! However, a normal blood test resulted.

Since taking supplements that unknowingly to me contained both iodine, in the form of chlorella, and potassium iodide (in a liquid vitamin/mineral supplement), the brain fog of

18 years cleared almost immediately and I am feeling much more alert and have less muscle pain. If this, as some might think, is psychosomatic, why, despite my positive attitude, is iodine the only thing to make any difference in 18+ years? It now all makes sense. If iodine is needed to remove or absorb metal toxins from the body and there is a deficiency of iodine, the toxins will build up and allergies and sensitivities will develop. I believe I have found the cause and, with this treated, I hope the other symptoms will become at least less troublesome. Many of my symptoms are fading or gone. My monthly cycle seems to have regulated itself and for about the first time ever is pretty much normal and pain free. The ectopics stopped almost as soon as I started the supplements containing iodine 6 months ago. These were so bad a while ago that I ended up in A & E. After investigations, nothing abnormal was found and it turned out to be caused by a herbal supplement I was taking – Ginkyo Biloba! I now use the very occasional ectopics as a very good indicator when I eat/do something that does not agree with me and they now rarely happen. The cardiologist I saw had no idea about this and when I tried to show him an article I had found he refused even to look. He shrugged his shoulders and sent me on my way – another anxious lady!

With regard to the vaccines, there is no record whatsoever of me ever even having them since the Occupational Health Dept at the hospital where I was working have since destroyed all my records. My GP has no record either.

It has been a long and lonely road. My family has only recently become convinced of my situation and this has caused problems at home. In the end the desperate need to be believed became almost as bad as the illness itself. The self-doubt constantly creeps in and you start to wonder if you should give in and take the only thing on offer - pills. I always knew deep down that this was not the answer. Now, at last, ears are pricking up and people are listening.

But most importantly, I have support from friends who truly understand because they are sufferers themselves, though I have also lost some friends, mostly in the medical and dental professions! It is mainly only when something like this affects you or someone close that you understand. I value those people tremendously. Rather ironically, many of my new friends I have made through the computer! Web-sites such as Diana Buckland's MCS Global, ES-UK, WDDTY and GMTV Jabs Forum provided the knowledge and contacts I needed. I have learnt so much from these organisations and these contacts and friends are invaluable. I have had more support in the last year than I have in my whole life!

I have recently had a letter published in my local paper in response to a mobile phone mast front-page article. I work in a museum and my boss is finding this very interesting, along with some colleagues. A few have asked me to take my detector to their home to check for EMR. One has even asked me where she can get a low emission phone from after she ditched her DECT! I am soon to have a meeting with our Health & Safety Officer from our local council because of my concerns about two DECT phones we use at work.

I realise that my ES/MCS symptoms are not severe and are very subtle and slow to come and go. This is why it has been so difficult to pin-point ES as being a problem for me. However, I do know that ES/MCS has, without a doubt, been a problem for me for many years and it has been enough to badly affect the quality of my life. I realise that many people are being made extremely ill by both chemicals and EMR, both so difficult to avoid. Because of this I am very keen to raise awareness and do what I can to help ES-UK and the sufferers it supports.

[Editor's comment:

Thank you to Anna for sharing your problems of living with ES.

If other readers are willing to write about their own experiences, please do so.]