A MOTHER'S LOVE, MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS & THE CORRELATION BETWEEN FLARE INCIDENCES

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Hypothesis: Is a mother's love enough to slow down the disease process of multiple sclerosis? Does a mother's perception of her children's independence benchmark a point when the mother has an increase in incidence of flares?

Patients: Three patients were chosen based upon their motor functions and cognition. Patient One (P1) is completely bed bound, Patient Two (P2) is confined to a wheelchair and Patient Three (P3), is active and independent. Each patient has two children and is in different stages of the disease.

Method: Interviews were conducted over a five week period and access was granted to each patient’s medical file to confirm medical history. Each patient was asked about the content of their meals to establish level of memory. After a level of memory was established, the concentrated interview was conducted and included the following questions: (1) What is your earliest childhood memory? (2) In what year were you diagnosed with MS? (3) How many children do you have? (4) When did you notice the disease getting worse?

Limitations: Further investigation should include a larger number of participants. Another addition to the testing pool would be adoptive mothers diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in order to demonstrate any hormonal correlations to that of a biological and a non-biological mother.

Discussion: Each woman noticed the progression of the disease or an increase in flares by milestones of her perceived independence in her child’s life. An increase of flares in these cases correlated to times in their children’s lives when the patient’s role as a mother was diminishing. P1 stated that once her son received his driver’s license and became more independent she lost some “motivation to fight” and her flares increased. P3’s flares coincide with her children’s birthdays; she has had a flare at or just weeks before both children’s birthdays for the last five years. Similarly, a decrease in flares occurred when the mothers’ felt that their child needed them. P2 was in the midst of an increase in flare incidence, but when she was told of her daughter’s schizophrenia diagnosis there was a marked decrease in the number of flares, once her daughter completed treatment (1 year time period) P2’s incidence of flares increased.