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Enzyme Fights Fatigue – Study

WASHINGTON- A nutritional supplement based on an energy-giving natural enzyme can help in some cases of chronic fatigue syndrome, researchers said yesterday.

A team at Georgetown University in Washington tested the supplement, ENADA, and found that it had helped as many as 72 percent of patients with the condition.

More than 500,000 Americans have been diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome, and an estimated 2 million people believe they have it. In the Georgetown study, approved by the US Food and Drug Administration, Dr. Joseph Bellanti and colleagues said they tested 26 patients in the equivalent of a Phase II safety and efficacy trial.

For four weeks half the patients got ENADA and half the patients got placebos. For the next month both groups got nothing, then the groups were switched - and the volunteers who got ENADA the first time got a placebo for the next four weeks, while the second group got the supplement.

Neither group knew which they were getting at the time, placebo or supplement. Writing in the *Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology*, Bellanti's team said 31 percent of the patients said their symptoms got better while they took ENADA, as opposed to 8 percent of those on placebo.

Then the researchers opened the trial, allowing all the volunteers to knowingly take ENADA. After a year 72 percent reported improvement.

ENADA is the brand name of the company's version of a natural substance known as nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide, plus energy hydrogen. It is a co-enzyme - the active part of the chemical reaction that enzymes produce in the body. According to MENUCO, the more nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide a cell has the more energy it has. The company hopes that can translate up to the level of a whole human being.

Unlike many supplement companies, MENUCO went through some of the FDA protocols for testing. They were not required to.

In December Hemisphere Biopharma Inc. applied for European Union approval of the first-ever drug to treat chronic fatigue syndrome. The drug, Ampligen, is also being tested for FDA approval. It consists of hydrocortisone, a synthetic version of one of the corticosteroid hormones produced by the adrenal gland.

Chronic fatigue syndrome is hard to define, marked mainly by unexplained lack of energy.

Sometimes called myalgic encephalomyelitis, some doctors attribute it to psychological rather than physical causes.

Others say a virus, perhaps Epstein-Barr virus may cause it, or perhaps an autoimmune disorder in which the body's immune system mistakenly turns against itself.

