
WHAT IS NARCOLEPSY?

Narcolepsy is the second leading cause of excessive daytime sleepiness.

Diagnosis is often not made until many years after the onset of symptoms, likely to be due to both misdiagnosis by health care professionals or failure to seek medical advice about daytime sleepiness.

The main symptoms of narcolepsy are excessive daytime sleepiness and abnormal REM (rapid-eye movement) sleep.

Another symptom of Narcolepsy is a sudden episode of muscle weakness (called Cataplexy) triggered by emotions where a patient's knees buckle and may give way upon laughing, elation, surprise or anger. In other typical instances the head may drop or the jaw may become slack. In severe cases, the patient might fall down and become completely paralyzed for a few seconds or up to several minutes.

THE LINK BETWEEN SWINE FLU VACCINES AND NARCOLEPSY

In recent years an increasing amount of children have been diagnosed with narcolepsy after receiving the Pandemrix vaccine that was introduced by the HSE with the intention of combating an anticipated pandemic called the Swine Flu in 2009- 2010.

The vaccine was given to more than 900,000 people in Ireland through HSE clinics and GPs as part of the Swine Flu vaccination campaign.

Studies suggest that children are around 14 times more likely to develop narcolepsy following the Pandemrix vaccination.

By early 2010 it was evident that the swine flu pandemic was much less lethal than had been predicted by the World Health Organization and its scientific advisors.

By the end of 2010, swine flu had ceased to occupy the attention of the world's news media and the 'pandemic' was described in the scientific press as "a damp squib" and as "the swine flu scam".

WHAT WAS UNSAFE ABOUT THE VACCINE?

To meet anticipated demand when talks of a pandemic were at their peak, some manufacturers added a chemical booster to their product to speed up the manufacturing process, notwithstanding well-publicised concerns regarding the safety of these boosters. Normal vaccine licensing procedures were 'fast-tracked'.

The chemical used in the Pandemrix AS03 Vaccine had not been properly tested in children; its safety having been trialed primarily on healthy adults aged 18–60.

The Irish government came to an agreement with the manufacturers of swine flu vaccines that they would carry the legal risks in the event of patients experiencing any vaccine-related harms.

The vaccine first began to raise major concerns in Europe after revelations that the vaccine accidentally tricked the immune system into mistaking a chemical signal the body naturally sends to the brain to assist in regulating sleep for the swine flu virus.

Despite receiving updated information from manufacturers about possible adverse effects of the Pandemrix vaccine, State bodies continued to encourage healthy citizens to get the vaccine from HSE clinics and GPs without a review of the programme.

HOW IS NARCOLEPSY DIAGNOSED?

Overnight polysomnography sleep studies and multiple sleep latency tests and a lumbar puncture test.

CAN NARCOLEPSY BE CURED?

Narcolepsy is a lifetime neurological disease with severe impact on school performance, quality of life, and employment.

Treatments at present only deal with symptoms and are often very expensive and difficult to obtain. Although the best treatments are helpful, they rarely completely remove symptoms.

HOW WE CAN HELP?

Lynch Solicitors has a strong history of litigating medical negligence.

If you or a member of your family has been affected by the Pandemrix vaccine we will be happy to meet with you to explore the legal options available and discuss any potential compensation claim you may have arising out of receiving the vaccine.

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