

DR NIGEL SPEIGHT

CV in relation to ME/CFS

I am Dr. Nigel Speight, a consultant paediatrician formerly at the University Hospital of North Durham. My qualifications are MA, MB, BChir, FRCP, FRCPCH, DCH. I have 40 years of experience in paediatrics, 25 as a consultant. I retired from my post in Durham in 2007 but continue to practice as a consultant locum and remain on the medical register.

Over the last 30 years I have developed an extensive experience and interest in the area of ME/CFS [Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome] in childhood and adolescents. Within North Durham alone I accumulated over 200 cases under my personal care. In addition, because of my special interest, I have had over 400 cases referred to me from elsewhere in the Northern Region and all over the United Kingdom. These referrals have been from general practitioners and fellow paediatricians. The G.P. referrals have tended to be because the local paediatricians had shown a reluctance to diagnose ME and the family were dissatisfied at the uncertainty. The Northern paediatricians have often referred for confirmation of the diagnosis and advice on management. The distant paediatricians have usually referred because the cases were of a severity they had never witnessed before. In this context I have travelled to Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man, Inverness, South Wales, Buckinghamshire, Manchester and Essex.

With the retirement of the late Dr Alan Franklin I became the paediatrician with probably the greatest accumulated clinical experience of this condition in the UK.

I have performed research on this area, reporting a 6-10 year follow-up survey of 49 of my Durham cases. I presented this paper at our College's AGM in York in 2003. This is the first study of its kind in this country but very similar findings have been recently reported in the USA and Australia.

I have helped to support over 50 families of children with ME who were threatened with Child Protection proceedings because of the failure of their local doctors to make a firm diagnosis of ME. Many of these parents were falsely accused of Fabricated and Induced Illness (FII). I have given evidence for court proceedings not only in this country but also in Norway, Denmark and Germany, and am currently involved in a similar case in France.

I have given invited lectures on paediatric ME to a national paediatric conference in Cambridge, to paediatricians in the North East, and to trainee paediatricians in the North East. In 1994 I gave an invited lecture to the College of Paediatrics and Child Health on the subject. In 2000 I gave an invited lecture to a national conference in London (Fatigue 2000). In 2002 I was invited to Sydney, Australia to lecture on both my follow-up study and my experience of cases where young people with ME/CFS had been subjected to child protection proceedings by disbelieving professionals.

More recently, I gave an invited lecture to an international ME meeting in Oslo in 2011, followed by one in Stockholm in 2014. I have since given further invited lectures in Amsterdam and Reykjavik.

I am currently the paediatric adviser to the charities the TYMES Trust, ME Association (MEA), the 25% Group, BRAME (the Blue Ribbon Awareness of ME charity) and the Welsh ME Association. For many years I was also paediatric adviser to the Association of Young People with ME (AYME) and Action for ME.

For two years I was a paediatric member of the Working Party on ME/CFS set up by the Chief Medical Officer. This provided its final report in February 2002, and was a major milestone in the final acceptance of ME/CFS as an organic condition.

Subsequently I was a member of the Guidelines group on the management of ME/CFS for the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH); the guidelines were published in January 2005. I co-authored the section on "Management of Severe ME" with Dr Harvey Marcovitch for these guidelines.

I have addressed the Gibson Enquiry (UK Parliamentary group on ME) and also the Scottish all-parliamentary group on ME on three occasions in recent years.

I am a contributing author to the recent International Consensus Criteria for ME, and recently published a review article on ME in the Saudi Arabian Medical Journal..

In addition I have a longstanding interest in the area of Child Abuse and Neglect, a subject on which I have performed research, written numerous articles, and lectured extensively to medical and multidisciplinary audiences. For 10 years I was the paediatric representative on the Durham Area Child Protection Committee. In 2001

I was a member of the committee of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health looking at the problem of Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy. I also have a special interest in Psychological problems in paediatrics, having been Deputy Convenor and then Convenor of our College's Psychiatry and Psychology Subgroup over a period of six years.

More recently I have published papers on "Severe ME in Children" and "Life-threatening malnutrition in severe ME" (the latter winning the Goudsmit prize awarded by the ME Association)

Most recently, in 2021 I attended the round table event hosted by NICE at which I represented the two charities the 25% group and TYMES Trust. This meeting was called to discuss the new guidelines with representatives of the Royal Colleges

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Durham

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