

## **The Trial Lawyer Who Could Not Talk**

### **March 2006**

'The trial lawyer who could not talk', that was how the doctors referred to my husband's case. My husband was recently diagnosed with CADASIL. Fortunately we live in Chicago and have access to some of the hospitals that knew about CADASIL. Doctors at each of the different hospitals saw my husband and a subset of the doctors collaborated on his case. It took a total of 5 weeks to diagnose him.

His symptoms presented through aphasia; knowing what he wanted to say, though the inability to find the words. He experienced two episodes one evening, a few hours apart lasting only a few minutes. We were fortunate that when we made the phone call to our general practitioner he encouraged us to go to the emergency room immediately. It was there that a CAT scan was done and inflammation was seen in the brain. At about midnight doctors were brought in to do an MRI and demyelination of white matter was identified throughout much of the brain. It was thought the most likely cause was MS and treatment of high levels of steroids was done; very important to note, steroids should be avoided with CADASIL. The doctors considered a number of diseases in the diagnosis, and my husband was tested for each: Multiple Sclerosis, ADEM, Infections, various autoimmune, Vasculitis, Mitochondrial, Leukoencephalopathy, and CADASIL. CADASIL at the time was considered unlikely because both of my husband's parents were in their 60s with no symptoms. It was the Athena genetics lab test that provided positive diagnosis for CADASIL. After diagnosis, both of my husband's parents were tested. His mother was diagnosed with CADASIL at age 61 with no symptoms. My husband's grandfather (his mother's father) was diagnosed and died from NPH at age 60 and his great grandfather had a low pressure stroke; which now we know was misdiagnosed many years ago. Our concern now is our 6-month-old son.

Each day we hope and pray he does not have CADASIL.

Thank you again for reading this article.

Anonymous