

Broadly speaking, there are 2 types of muscle/bone problems:

1. Mechanical: degenerative problems such as spondylosis, osteoarthritis; generalised muscle pain: fibromyalgia
2. Inflammatory: rheumatoid arthritis, inflammatory myopathy etc. (note, arachnoiditis is itself an inflammatory condition).

In arachnoiditis, there tends to be a combination of the two types. This has an impact on the way in which one can tackle the condition.

To alleviate the first type of problem we need:

Physical treatments: physiotherapy, chiropractic, massage, gentle exercise, hydrotherapy etc.

Unfortunately, if these therapies are too strenuous, they can be counterproductive should there be an inflammatory condition (which there is in arachnoiditis), then this can be significantly worsened. This can lead to three main difficulties:

1. Obviously, there is increased pain and sometimes functional impairment;
2. Medical personnel may expect good results from the therapy and feel that lack of progress, or indeed, deterioration, reflects a psychological problem with the patient. Respect for the patient's point of view may become seriously impaired.
3. The patient becomes disillusioned and dejected, feeling that there is no light at the end of the tunnel; alternatively, there may be anger and/or loss of trust in the medical personnel.

It is therefore vital for doctors, physiotherapists etc. to be aware of the inflammatory component of arachnoiditis. For this reason, consultation with a Rheumatologist may be helpful, as these doctors are accustomed to dealing with long-term conditions which need careful handling.

The sort of therapy which might benefit the inflammatory problems includes:

- Hot/cold compresses
- Joint supports
- A carefully planned exercise regime that is tailored to individual needs and can be adjusted as appropriate in response to 'flare ups'.
- Dietary measures including supplements
- Medication such as anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) which might include steroids (NOT SPINALLY INJECTED!) at times of major exacerbation.
- Physiotherapy techniques such as ultrasound which can reduce inflammation

Obviously, some of these measures are simple and can be applied by the patient, others require medical input.

It is important that there is ongoing treatment as this is an ongoing condition.