

# **REVIEW OF HEALTH DISCRIMINATION**

## **MULTIPLE CHEMICAL SENSITIVITY**

My submission will be in three parts.

1. My story
2. Some problems faced by MCS sufferers, and some important points.
3. Summary of urgent needs and Reference List and acknowledgement.

### **MY STORY**

My name is **Stella Hondros**. I was born in Corinth Greece on 29-6 -1952. I migrated to Sydney, Australia in 1954 and lived there till 1962 when my family went back to Greece. On realising that Greece was not for us, my family the came back to **Australia (1963)** and stopped in Perth. We purchased a home at 23 Kidman Avenue, Guildford, and that is where I spent the rest if my childhood, with my parents and my four siblings. That is also when my chemical problems began.

There was often a **smell in the air** like a heavy fig tree smell, and we found it most unpleasant. When we asked the neighbours what it was the said it was the **fumigation of aircraft** at the airport. We had to put up with it. My parents spoke English poorly, and as a consequence no one else questioned it further.

The **Guildford Shire Council** also put in place the **Fruit Fly Baiting Scheme, using LYBACID**, and I had the job of taking a letter of complaint, signed by my parents, to the Council, as we could not afford to pay for it. None of our fruit got to fall on the ground, as we ate it as it ripened. We lived in that half an acre. We ate the fruit we climbed the trees, and sat on the grass, and Council sent someone every couple of weeks to spray. We were told not to eat fruit for a week after spraying, but no one said we should not play there. My parents were constantly looking out for the spray person to send them away.

My **brother and I** had especially bad, repeated, **nosebleeds and headaches**, which continued till we moved to Redcliffe.

After finishing my studies at Curtin University and UWA in 1972, I became a teacher and got married. I taught for two years and then had two children (Maria in 1977 and Yannis in 1978).

In the early 1980's I started to have definite rapid heart rates, or **tachycardia** attacks. Between attacks smaller flutters were continuous but I learned to live with it, straining when it occurred and stopping it. I was continually tired, and generally unwell. I was diagnosed with **Fibromyalgia and Chronic Fatigue**. My symptoms increased and grew worse. All doctors would say is to take painkillers and that I had stress and needed psychological help. One doctor even wrote on a piece of paper that I had panic disorder and depression and that I should go home and read it over and over till I believed it! Another told me that if he sat all-day he would fall asleep too!

Eventually I became so ill that I could not work or drive a car, and was basically bed ridden. For the heart condition I had to take medicines such as LANOXIN, CORDORONE, FLECANIDE, AND TAMBOCOR, THYROXIN, and various blood thinners to stop clots from forming. These **drugs had horrific side effects** on me. I also had to take many painkillers especially at night.

## MY SYMPTOMS INCLUDED:

Distressed sleep and nightmares that ended in sweats and Tachycardia.  
Chronic exhaustion, needing to lie down / Fibromyalgia.  
Poor nervous response.  
Poor memory.  
Headaches, plus stabbing pains at base of brain.  
Ear aches and Tinnitus.  
Eyes stressed and sore and difficult to focus.  
Poison and excessive salivation and very bad breath.  
Sore and bleeding and receding gums especially at back of mouth  
Swollen neck glands, permanently.  
Blood tests always showing higher than normal antibodies.  
Thyroid dysfunction / low function.  
Heart problems, tachycardia, fibrillation, and chest pains.  
Edema especially in hands and feet.  
Loss of co-ordination, plus often choking when swallowing.  
Stabbing pains in body especially in arms and legs.  
Tenderness under ribs on right side.  
Low grade fever, almost constant.  
Breathing difficulty, like lack of oxygen.  
Heat caused symptoms to be worse.  
Antibiotic resistant infections.  
Nausea in morning and after food, whole digestive tract always uncomfortable, also flatulence / bloating.  
Mood disorders such as panic attacks depression and high anxiety.  
Waking in small hours of morning feeling very ill.

I eventually went to an **Alternative Health Practitioner** and asked him to help me **wean off all medications**. I had natural herbs to help me get stronger. I realised that I was very sensitive to Chemicals. Over the years I would have about one or two or sometimes three attacks per year.

Every so often my heart would go into tachycardia for no logical reason. I was so well in between times that I did not need any medication to control the heartbeat. I knew that **something was triggering it**. Sometimes I would have a feeling that I was losing my beat but when the doctor checked me he could not detect a problem.

In June 2002, I had an attack and I reacted to corrective medication (amioderone) in **Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital** emergency room and ended up with **cardiac arrest!** I now have some **brain damage**. Since then doctors there have been afraid to give me drugs and I have had to have general anesthesia and electric shock to the heart.

If I had died from this pesticide exposure, my death certificate would say that I died from heart failure. Likewise the spray man is reported to die of an aneurysm, not by weakening of his blood vessels caused by chemical exposure! **Hence statistics are not reflective of the REAL FACTS.**

In November 2002, I asked the **gardening lady next door** not to spray any pesticide on the driveway, as I was chemically sensitive. Before I knew it I was in tachycardia again, and I find out later that she poured Roundup on my shared driveway. Why are these pesticides available to the unsuspecting public?

Within two weeks I had another attack, after walking to the local park, again the same shocking procedures were done. However a relative had seen a **council spray vehicle** in the area only a few hours before and so I was able to trace events. I rang the Cambridge Council and their spray dates corresponded to my attacks. Since then I have been trying to get them to stop spraying Roundup. It did not end there, I had another attack, this time I find that **Bold Park** had been sprayed with **2% glyphosate plus Agral**, all over Bold Park. (About 50 hectares, **one Km** from my home) I told Town of Cambridge that **300 metres exclusion zone** offered to me, was not enough. But that is all they have given me and when they last sprayed, I had to leave My home for about three weeks while they took two weeks to spray and one week minimum to gas off.

Town of Cambridge and the Health Department have dragged this out for seven months and were telling me that we could negotiate, but at the last moment they **did not negotiate**. I had only one day's notice to pack up and go elsewhere. **THE PROBLEM IS WHERE DO I GO? WHERE IN W.A, CAN I GO TO AVOID SPRAYING?**

We drove to Mandurah for a few days, then they were going to spray so we drove to the South Coast as we had heard that at Peaceful Bay someone else with this problem had sought refuge. **WE FELT LIKE REFUGEES!**

The long **trip made me ill** for two weeks and my problem was not solved. This devastates my life and my family. In **2002**, I had **five tachycardia attacks** and **three** so far this year (**2003**), all related to pesticide / Glyphosate/ and Agral, and Roundup exposures.

I have been **extremely unwell and for the last five years** I have not been able to work, drive a car and **need assistance** to do housework. E.g. I cannot do any task, like vacuuming, where I have to bend even slightly, as my heart feels uncomfortable. In fact sleeping on my left side is uncomfortable for my heart. Sleep is laboured and disturbed and not refreshing.

I forget things on the stove and have difficulty completing tasks. **LOSS OF EXECUTIVE FUNCTION.**

**I SUFFER ANXIETY, and CONFUSION.** Sometimes I am like **stupefied** and just wander around the house aimlessly. My thinking is like through a fog, and I have constant headache, especially at base of brain. At discussions I have to strain to understand what is going on. I get left and right confused. **My husband has had to forsake his career in order to look after me.** His life is constantly on edge as when I collapse there is no sound.

**Economically it has been disastrous.** We are living on our savings and my illness has cost us thousands of dollars in medical bills. It has also cost the Health system plenty.

**Our children are also distressed** over the situation.

**MY IMMUNE SYSTEM IS BROKEN DOWN BY YEARS OF TOXIC EXPOSURES.**

**I AM SUFFERING MULTIPLE CHEMICAL SENSITIVITY COMPLEMENTS OF THE SPRAYING BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.**

Both Town of Cambridge and The Health Department **demand** that I Produce a '**Report by my Specialist Physician specifically explaining my condition**' I have this in writing from Town of Cambridge, and now they do not want to **pay my medical bill**. Why do I need to prove my medical condition before they stop spraying me. I have a right to not have my biological space **VIOLATED!**

Town of Cambridge also **sent my letter of complaint to Monsanto** who promptly replied, with a wad of information, saying that it was impossible for me to have this problem and that I should look elsewhere for the causes to my complaint. Their product they said is comparable to baby shampoo and dish detergent!

It is like the knife murderer referring the victim to the knife manufacturer, to validate his actions. **I WILL NOT BE BULLIED! HOW DARE TOWN OF CAMBRIDGE INTIMIDATE A SICK WOMAN, BY PITTING ME AGAINST A MULTINATIONAL!**

**The HEALTH DEPARTMENT is slow to act or ignoring me**, in spite of the ministers (**Mr Bob Kuchera's**) request to investigate. The Chief toxicologist Mr Martin Mattison went to great lengths to explain registration of chemicals to me but this does not alter the fact that what Councils are using, are toxic pesticides. See Journal of Pesticide Reform and FRAUDULENT CLAIMS about ROUNDUP REGISTRATION, Etc.

### **LIST OF SYMPTOMS SUFFERED WHEN I HAVE AN EXPOSURE TO PESTICIDES:**

1. Tachycardia/ arrhythmia/ fibrillation, severe chest pains through to my back.
2. Headache especially at base of brain.
3. Confusion, foggy brain, vagueness, comatose feeling.
4. Eyes are itchy, outside and in, red eyes, very sensitive to light, pupils become very small, like pinprick and difficulty seeing.
5. Very tired, sick feelings, unwellness.
6. Back of throat weird feel and taste, bleeding gums.
7. Digestion uncomfortable, very bloated, sick when I eat, diarrhea.
8. Swollen sore, neck glands, especially the left side. Vagus nerve?
9. Abnormally high urination, sore kidneys.
10. Adrenal glands very sore.

## **SOME PROBLEMS FACED BY MCS SUFFERERS**

1. Medical practitioners **do not recognise** MCS as a health issue. We are **misdiagnosed** and hence **not treated** appropriately.
2. Chronic fatigue and Fibromyalgia are chronic toxicity, mostly caused by **pesticide poisoning**, which is mostly by government departments spraying pesticides.
3. MCS patients **avoid going to doctors** because:
  - a. **Chemicals** in surgeries make them more ill, e.g. Perfumes, carpet glues, paint smells.
  - b. Doctors only offer **pharmaceutical solutions**, in the form of prescriptions, which make MCS patients more ill.
  - c. Doctors usually blame our condition on **psychological reasons**. This is **insulting**, and we feel **ridiculed**. Then we really get **depressed** with despair.
  - d. Doctors either ignore or are **unaware of the magnitude of chemical spraying of pesticides by government departments**. In the spring when we go to the doctor with itchy eyes sore throat and flu like symptoms, the condition is always blamed on hay fever and antihistamines are prescribed. In autumn the flu is blamed and antibiotics are prescribed. They never consider pesticide spraying as a cause. Our high children's asthma rates are likely to be related to pesticide spraying.
4. **THERE IS NOWHERE TO GO WHERE PESTICIDES ARE NOT SPRAYED**. Councils spray every footpath, verge, street, every park, every school, hospital, and public place in the whole of Australia! Country areas are worse as spraying is from aircraft! Country people suffer greatly.
5. **Hospitals are not equipped** to deal with MCS patients. For me it is a **trauma** in itself to visit a hospital and nurses have actually hid behind the curtain to see if I really can smell them, and to see what will happen. This is not only humiliating but also downright dangerous for someone already chemically traumatised. This happened at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. It smells like a Myers perfume department.

## 6. Why MCS patients avoid hospitals

- a. Staff wear **perfumes**.
  - b. **Wipes** used when using injections, contain chemicals which cause people like me pain up my whole arm, when bungs and needles are put in.
  - c. **Cleaning** staff use strong chemicals.
  - d. **Food is inedible** as it is not organic and we cannot eat as it makes us more ill due to pesticide contents. Even traces of pesticide can be disastrous. Also colours, flavours, and preservatives are not tolerated.
  - e. **OXYGEN** is required but is not always given as patient is wrongly diagnosed as psychiatric.
  - f. The stick ons used for heart monitors etc. and **sticky plasters** contain chemicals and cause serious skin damage. This happens to me every time but the staff do not have the Band-Aids for sensitive skin handy and so I get bad irritation.
  - g. MCS patients need to be **separated from other patients** to avoid further exposures, and to have the room set up in a suitable manner. E.g. No chemicals, proper Band-Aids for sensitive skin, oxygen etc. Suitable Hospital Protocol has been developed for MCS patients.
7. There **are no institutions**, which can take MCS patients, E.g. Old peoples homes and Hospitals and other types of care facilities. There no rehabilitation centres which we can use, E.g. Physiotherapy, etc. An Ambulance ride can be a trauma.
8. Most of us prefer to **suffer at home**, no doctors, no medical aid. We are **isolated in sickness. MCS is not acknowledged by the medical profession** as it is deemed to be taboo. Chemical companies are not impressed and it is in the too hard basket for doctors, as their scripts do not necessarily solve our problems. I BELIEVE THAT DOCTORS ARE AFRAID TO SPEAK THEIR MIND BECAUSE OF FEAR OF PHARMACUITICAL COMPANIES. I believe that the Health Department is also afraid to speak up!



9. Public buildings are most often **sick buildings** and we cannot go there. E.g. libraries, learning institutions. Children in schools is a major concern, bear in mind 50% have asthma. Chemicals in the classroom are a problem E.g.. Whiteboard markers, glues, paint, chemicals in toilets. ADD, irritation, agitation, lack of concentration, brain function impairment can all be associated with chemical poisoning.
10. **Teachers need to learn to recognise symptoms of chemical poisoning**, and doctors should not be prescribing more chemicals to add to children's toxic load. No spraying must take place anywhere near schools or parks.
11. **Supermarkets and shops are problem places for us.** We need to go there but we end up being sick for days after. Most products are adulterated in some way by chemicals, E.g. food additives. Food products must not be sold in the same shop as pesticides, cleaning products, and other chemicals. Food should not be sold for example in Petrol Stations. Our food choices are limited to strictly organic.
12. **Public toilets** usually have strong chemicals and we cannot use them.
13. We are house bound as walking to park or street is a hazard. Outings expose us to car fumes, perfumes, pesticides, etc. **SPRAYED AREAS HAVE NO WARNING SIGNS! WE ARE PRISONERS IN OUR OWN HOMES AND THAT IS OFTEN NOT ENOUGH TO KEEP US SAFE.**
14. **WE ALL NEED CARERS.** When I have an exposure I just drop silently, and cannot call for help. Family members are always on edge for us.
15. **MOST PEOPLE WITH MCS DO NOT REALISE THAT THEY HAVE CHEMICAL SENSITIVITY TILL IT IS TOO LATE, AND THEY BECOME PERMANENTLY DAMAGED.** Most end up clogging the Hospital system and remain undiagnosed, so they cannot protect themselves.
16. **EVENTUALLY THEY REALISE THAT THE MEDICAL PROFESSION HAS NOTHING TO OFFER THEM AND THEIR ONLY OPTION IS TO TURN TO SELF-HELP GROUPS.**
17. **HEADWEST** has classified MCS patients the same as Acquired Brain Injury patients.
18. **WE NEED A TASK FORCE TO GIVE US SOLUTIONS AND TO IMPLEMENT THEM.**
19. **IMMEDIATELY, ALL SPRAYING MUST STOP.**
20. I believe a three-year **university course** for spray persons, and to register all chemicals used, is necessary so that we know what is used in total.

21. I **warned** the Health Department and Town of Cambridge about chemicals washing into the **River** with the first rains, killing all normal algae, and leaving only the most toxic ones with no competition and an opportunity to bloom. Fertilizers and other factors may contribute, but when one considers the volume of pesticides used by government departments, one can only conclude that this is the problem. Why has this not been acknowledged?
22. Dry conditions and poor soil bacteria, means that the sprays are not broken down and when the wind blows soil particles around, we get a reaction again. **Sprays re-hydrate and reactivate** after first winter rains. The late summer heat and steam make people like me sick again, as on Feb 17, 2003. **50% of our children suffer from asthma**, a lung irritation and are prescribed puffers as their lives are in danger! (this is the highest rate in the world!). Others have itchy eyes and flu like symptoms. **IF NOTHING ELSE CONSIDER THE CHILDREN AND UNBORNS!**
23. **ALL PEOPLE WILL EVENTUALLY BE IN THE MCS CATEGORY, IF PESTICIDE SPRAYING CONTINUES.** A one % fall in IQ levels will have disastrous consequences for our society as we know it. Not to mention the disastrous health consequences. Once our genetic code is damaged it cannot recover.
24. **THE COST TO THE HEALTH SYSTEM HAS BLOWN OUT! THE COST TO THE INDIVIDUAL AND THEIR FAMILY IS IMMEASURABLE.**
25. **CHEMICALS MUST NOT BE USED FOR COSMETIC AND PREVENTATIVE PURPOSES.**
26. It is our **BIRTHRIGHT** to live in an unadulterated environment. It is our right to be able to go anywhere in our habitat without the fear of pesticide assault. It is our right that we are not sold pesticides so freely, under the deception that they are safe or convenient to use. All other avenues of solutions need to be explored, and pesticides left as a last resort.

**GOVERNMENT HAS FAILED IN ITS DUTY OF CARE.**

Who gave any Public servant the right to say that it is OK to allow any levels of pesticides in peoples bodies! ? **IT IS NOT OK!**

**I DON'T ABUSE MY BODY WITH SMOKING OR ALCOHOL OR ANY OTHER WAY. WHY DO YOU ABUSE ME?**

If passive smoking is a proven health hazard, then what is different about what government bodies are doing with pesticides?

**STOP THE ABUSE!**

## **SUMMARY**

**GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS NEED TO RECOGNISE THE HEALTH PROBLEMS THEY ARE CAUSING BY SPRAYING AND STOP THIS PRACTICE.** Is there some logic in all shires following the **Shire of Nedlands** who recently made the decision to use steam spraying? This will also avoid **future LEGAL PROBLEMS.**

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS E.g. Agriculture department need to take more **responsibility** for their liberal encouragement to people to use pesticide. Roundup is promoted as being a least toxic pesticide solution, however be reminded IT IS STILL TOXIC!

Immediate plans are necessary to convert ALL farming to **biodynamic principals**. Our food is becoming inedible.

**MEDICAL PERSONEL AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS NEED TO UNDERSTAND MULTIPLE CHEMICAL SENSITIVITY IN ORDER TO HELP VICTIMS.**

WE NEED GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE TO **IMPLEMENT PROCEDURES AND SUPPORT BODIES** TO ADDRESS OUR HEALTH ISSUES. E.g. HOSPITALS FACILITIES, DETOXIFICATION CENTRES, MEDICAL PERSONEL WHO UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM. WE WOULD ALSO LIKE LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR THOSE WHO MAY NEED IT.

EVEN IF SPRAYING STOPPED RIGHT NOW, WE NEED ALLOCATION OF **CLEAN LAND BY THE OCEAN**, at least two locations, WHERE MCS PATIENTS CAN GO FOR **RESPIRE**, AND TO **LIVE**, AS WE ARE NOW SENSITIVE TO EVERYTHING.

WE NEED A **PUBLIC REGISTER** FOR PESTICIDE POISONING and for MULTIPLE CHEMICAL SENSITIVITY.

**WE NEED LEGAL AID TO MOUNT A CLASS ACTION.**

**‘No person in an advertisement shall make any claim or statement that a pesticide is harmless to humans, or which is false or misleading in any particular concerning the pesticide or its constituents.’**

STATE REGULATION 12 Health Regulations 1956.

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