

# CIRS on a Budget

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# Objectives

- ▶ Present scenarios of patients with CIRS that are underinsured and low income
- ▶ Provide an overview of the Southwest Florida Free Pain Clinic
- ▶ Review the screening tests for CIRS
- ▶ Describe a template for diagnosing and treating CIRS patients in a free clinic
- ▶ Present patient outcomes of CIRS treatment in a free clinic
- ▶ Consider a template for treating CIRS patients in your practice that are underinsured and financially challenged





# Disclosures

- ▶ I have no significant financial disclosures other than ownership of my medical practice, International Center for Health and Wellness, LLC



# My background

- ▶ Board certified in Emergency Medicine and practiced that for 17 years, including ED Director for 10 years
- ▶ Owner of the International Center for Health and Wellness, LLC in Fort Myers, Florida since 2001
- ▶ Founder of Christian Medical Ministries and the Southwest Florida Free Pain Clinic since 2010
- ▶ Shoemaker Proficiency Partner in 2019, but doing CIRS care for 15 years
- ▶ Author of “Prescription for Health: Living a Balanced Life in a Toxic world”
- ▶ Founder of the Christian CIRS Network
- ▶ Christian physician seeking to provide holistic care for body, mind and spirit



# Case Study 1

- ▶ 2018: Stacy is a 44 yo wife and mother who is in constant pain from Fibro and PMR and virtually immobile. She has severe GI problems and is obese
- ▶ Her family must help her up from chair or bed and she is mostly wheelchair bound, needing assistance to feed herself or bathe
- ▶ She has seen numerous providers in the past and had many ER visits. She has failed all traditional treatments
- ▶ Stacy has attempted numerous detox regimens and diets on her own with limited improvement. She takes many supplements. VCS+, 7/13 symptom clusters+
- ▶ She lived in a home in 2000 that had visible mold. She began falling in 2016 and a workup for ALS was neg. She developed an autoimmune eye disease and is slowly going blind
- ▶ She lives in a small home. Her husband does HVAC work. They have no health insurance. Her daughter is 15, sickly, with no energy. She has 1 natural teen with major developmental delays and 1 adopted teen with moderate autism





# Case Study 2

- ▶ 5/21 Christina is 53, homeless, living in her van and occasional friends' homes or relatives around the country. Believes she has mold illness. Sick entire life, exposed multiple times to WDB's. Prior Dx Fibro, MCSS. Works part time doing Door Dash
- ▶ She has been to many practitioners and had many treatments over the years. Using medical cannabis currently
- ▶ She has MCSS, MCAS and can't find a place to live that she does not react to. Brain fxn bad
- ▶ She travels 4 hours to see us/get meds and does virtual visits other times
- ▶ VCS+, 13/13 clusters +, routine labs ok except homocysteine; no CIRS labs done
- ▶ Appears to be 11-3-52 and is hyper-flexible



# Case study 3

- ▶ 12/15 Alea is a 26 yo married hair stylist who has been feeling progressively worse, with pain all over and no energy.
- ▶ Living in 1920's home with leaks. Her work is obvious WDB. Hx PCOS, on Metformin, unable to get pregnant
- ▶ Mom has Fibro and is also a patient; sister with similar symptoms. but not local
- ▶ VCS+, nearly every symptom (13/13 clusters +), all Fibro points. Labs with Autoimmune Thyroiditis, Hypothyroid. No CIRS labs done



# Southwest Florida Free Pain Clinic

- ▶ Non-profit, 501c3 public charity established in 2010 as Christian Medical Ministries with a Board of Directors
- ▶ Part of the Florida Dept of Health Volunteer Healthcare Provider Program
- ▶ Eligibility criteria: no insurance (Medicaid ok), under 200% of the federal poverty level
- ▶ Sovereign Immunity Clinic
- ▶ Started in donated church space; now in a leased medical office space
- ▶ Paid and volunteer staff
- ▶ The only known free pain clinic in the United States





# Mission, Vision, Statement of Faith

- ▶ Mission: We help restore hope for low income, uninsured patients through comprehensive evaluations and treatment plans using holistic, compassionate, and opioid-free care.
- ▶ Vision: Rewriting the paradigm for low income, uninsured pain patients
- ▶ Statement of Faith: same as Christian Medical and Dental Society
- ▶ Provide care for body, mind and spirit
- ▶ No discrimination: have patients of all faiths and atheists; all are welcome



# Template

- ▶ Evaluation by Physician or NP
- ▶ Physical Therapy
- ▶ Chiropractic
- ▶ Accupuncture
- ▶ Massage Therapy
- ▶ Modalities: Ultrasound, E-Stim, Traction, Anatomotor table
- ▶ Nutrition and Lifestyle Education
- ▶ CIRS Coaching
- ▶ Counseling
- ▶ Prayer
- ▶ Supplements/meds



# Types of patients treated

- ▶ Acute and chronic pain
- ▶ Neck and back pain
- ▶ Joint injuries
- ▶ Muscle Strains
- ▶ Migraines/Headaches
- ▶ Fibromyalgia
- ▶ Hispanic and Haitian population high so need interpreters





# Treating CIRS at the SWFFPC

- ▶ Started in 2015 with a mother and daughter (Alea) who presented with Fibro
- ▶ Had no insurance and could not afford to come to my medical practice
- ▶ Each failed VCS testing and had 13/13 Symptom complexes positive
- ▶ Was able to obtain basic labs from the local health care system: CBC, CMP, D3, FT4, FT3, TPO, B12, osmolality since they do those in house
- ▶ Unable to convince Labcorp, Quest or the health system to do any other free CIRS labs
- ▶ They begged me to help them. Another daughter had similar symptoms, but was not local. They functioned with great difficulty and did not know how they could continue working, but had to pay bills



# CIRS Protocol

## Treatment steps



# Screening patients

- ▶ History and exam consistent with Fibromyalgia
- ▶ Detailed history of prior treatments and exposures
- ▶ Current meds, supplements, substances
- ▶ VCS testing at VCStest.com for free; handout with instructions and reviewed in detail. Prefer large screen of computer vs phone. Some patients don't have access, so use friend or library. Office computer used for some
- ▶ 98% accurate if fail column C (must see >6) or D (must see >5) even with one eye; 1.5% false positive, 8% false negative. Correlates with retinal artery blood flow to optic nerve and retina. Will consider treating if are neg and have strong history and symptoms
- ▶ Symptom Cluster analysis: 6/13+ needs workup, 8/13+ has 98% probability of CIRS





# International Center for Health and Wellness, LLC

## Biotoxin Symptom Questionnaire

Please check **each** symptom you are experiencing:

- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Decreased ability to retain new knowledge
- Muscle aches
- Headaches
- Light sensitivity
- Impaired memory
- Decreased ability to find words
- Difficulty concentrating
- Joint pains
- Morning stiffness
- Muscle cramps
- Unusual skin sensitivity
- Tingling
- Shortness of breath
- Sinus congestion
- Cough
- Excessive thirst
- Confusion
- Appetite swings
- Difficulty regulating body temperature
- Increased urinary frequency
- Red eyes
- Blurry vision
- Night sweats
- Mood swings
- Ice-pick pains
- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhea
- Numbness
- Static shocks
- Vertigo (Dizziness)
- Tearing of eyes
- Disorientation
- Metallic taste

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# Testing

- ▶ Free basic labs from the local health system; CIRS labs are not affordable
- ▶ Nasal culture: donated by Microbiology Dx
- ▶ Medicaid patients in Florida must go to Labcorp and we have been successful at getting all CIRS testing covered
- ▶ Remember that Quest is preferred for TGF-beta 1, C4a, C3a, VEGF, VIP so those results may not be helpful from Labcorp
- ▶ NeuroQuant and Genie are not affordable in this population and Medicaid won't cover them
- ▶ Remember, even in medicine,  $2+2=4$



# Where do you start?

- ▶ The protocol remains the same in a free clinic, just with some modifications
- ▶ Informed consent documented
- ▶ Step 1 is the most difficult: remove yourself from the exposure
- ▶ What do you do when the patient can't afford to test their home and you can't get free test kits for them?
- ▶ What do you do when the patient is staying with someone or in their car because they are homeless?
- ▶ What do you do if they are able to do basic fungal testing, for example, and it shows a bad HERTSMI-2 score and the landlord does not care?
- ▶ What do you do when they are living in their own home and it is a WDB and they can't afford to do any remediation or purchase an I-Adapt Air





# Working Around Step 1

- ▶ Develop relationships with local HVAC professionals that you have trained and send paying patients: time to call in a favor
- ▶ Develop relationships with local IEP's to do brief free inspections
- ▶ Develop relationships with local remediation professionals to help on a case-by-case basis with reduced prices
- ▶ Write letters to landlords to get the place remediated per our standards or get the patient out of the lease. Then where do they go?
- ▶ Teach patients how to clean to remove Actinos and other Biotoxins
- ▶ You will have to start treatment while working on step 1 as it takes time and persistence



# Lifestyle education

- ▶ Patients in this demographic are often not eating well and are obese
- ▶ They may be using substances such as tobacco, alcohol and illegal drugs
- ▶ The number one drug of abuse?
- ▶ Spend extensive time teaching them what to eat and do
- ▶ Lifestyle educator needed
- ▶ What do you do when your patient is going to several food pantries to survive?
- ▶ Food stamps: still need to teach them what to buy



## Step 2: Binders

- ▶ Started using pure CSM supplied for free by Apothicare 360 pharmacy in Fort Myers
- ▶ As patient volume increased, it became financially difficult for them
- ▶ Was able to get free Welchol from Americares
- ▶ Obtained Welchol powder to make Welchol water for sensitive patients
- ▶ Will eventually need to convince Daiichi-Sankyo to donate Welchol
- ▶ Good Rx Colesevelam: 180 tabs for \$90.00 locally or \$40.00 mail order
- ▶ Typical side effect problems
- ▶ Able to provide free Magnesium oxide for problematic constipation





# Supplements and Meds

- ▶ Provided for free to patients (encouraged to make donation)
- ▶ Clinic purchases these except recent donation from Swanson
- ▶ Include Multivitamin, Selenium, Zinc picolinate, D3, NAC, Turmeric, Milk Thistle, Probiotic, Magnesium glycinate
- ▶ Molecularly distilled omega 3 from Swanson or Vitacost: pre-treatment with 2.4g EPA, 1.8g DHA for 5-7 days before Welchol
- ▶ Sleep supplements: Melatonin, 5-HTP, Theanine, Sleep Essentials, Taurine
- ▶ NP Thyroid samples from Acella
- ▶ Other meds from Americares: Cyclobenzaprine, Tizanidine, Amitriptyline, levothyroxine, NSAID's



# Step 3: MARCONS

- ▶ Test for MARCONS after minimum 1 month of treatment with Welchol
- ▶ Free nasal cultures from Microbiology Dx
- ▶ If positive, and out of exposure, treat with edta .2% + colloidal silver 50 ppm per protocol: get at reduced cost from Apothicare 360 and perhaps other compounding pharmacies
- ▶ Incidence and treatment outcomes similar to other practices/populations
- ▶ Critical issue is getting them out of exposure and teaching them how to remediate for Actinos



# Step 4: Wheat

- ▶ Remove gluten/gliadin and the rest of wheat
- ▶ Why is wheat so bad?
- ▶ Going wheat free in this population is challenging: wheat is cheap!
- ▶ Food pantries
- ▶ Food stamps
- ▶ Cultural foods
- ▶ Lifestyle Educator helpful to keep focused and make changes practical





# Step 5: Correct Androgens

- ▶ Can't afford to test these routinely
- ▶ If hormonal/adrenal symptoms persist, can provide some free saliva testing through ZRT
- ▶ If can afford BHT, can prescribe it through Apothicare 360 (compounding pharmacy)



# Step 6: correct ADH/osmolality

- ▶ Can't afford to measure ADH/Copeptin
- ▶ Assume they need more water intake (most patients dehydrated)
- ▶ Change the kind of water they are drinking (plastic bottles)
- ▶ If can afford it and can get permission from landlord, lease RO system under sink
- ▶ Portable RO systems
- ▶ If can't get RO system, fill jugs from grocery store machine (usually RO)
- ▶ Eliminate dehydrating beverages and Gatorade/Powerade



# Steps 7-8: MMP9, VEGF

- ▶ Can't afford to measure these
- ▶ Assume they are abnormal
- ▶ Low Amylose diet for 1 month
- ▶ High dose Omega 3 (2.4g EPA, 1.8g DHA) daily





# Steps 9-11

- ▶ Can't afford to measure C3a, C4a and TGF beta-1
- ▶ Hope they correct with treatment



# Step 12: VIP

- ▶ Have had 9 patients do low dose protocol for MCAS/MCSS with great results
- ▶ Have had 3 patients do regular VIP with great results (see case studies)
- ▶ This is financially challenging!
- ▶ Must ensure environment is safe, can pass VCS (if possible), MARCONS gone
- ▶ Informed consent
- ▶ Lab monitoring of GGT/Lipase per protocol: patient has to pay
- ▶ Minimum monthly follow up



# Challenges

- ▶ Each 100 patients:
- ▶ 50 never return after 1 or 2 visits
- ▶ Another 25 never return after first few months
- ▶ May not see a patient for many months: moved away, no gas money, jail, rehab, no transportation
- ▶ Of the 25 left, compliance is a huge issue
- ▶ CIRS coach, Lifestyle Coach, follow up calls all employed
- ▶ Environmental challenges galore
- ▶ At least 10 will have life changing outcomes (that we know of): 1/10 patients
- ▶ Those that persevere have great outcomes. They are worth it!





# Case Study 1 Outcome

- ▶ Stacy could not afford any CIRS labs. Basic labs showed low FT4 and mid range FT3, TPO-
- ▶ Treated with Welchol, NP Thyroid, CBD for pain, and edta/silver for MARCONS. Vision began to improve and became more mobile, got out of wheelchair
- ▶ Attended PT and other therapy 1-2/week and got stronger
- ▶ Home tested for fungi -neg
- ▶ Put on VIP 4/day per protocol (used credit card) and had tremendous improvement in pain and physical/brain function, vision.
- ▶ Got 3D Cone CT and found to have 6 cavitations; went to Nunnally in Austin for surgery and had further improvement
- ▶ Continues to improve with VIP 2/day, therapy



# Case Study 1 Outcome (cont)

- ▶ Daughter Allison age 15, VCS-, 8/13 clusters +, routine labs ok; brain fog, severe fatigue, vertigo. Treated with Welchol and edta/silver with great improvement
- ▶ Natural son Michael age 16, 3 mos premature on ventilator and steroids; developmental delays, autism, vaccine reactions, Psoriasis; VCS+, 5/13 clusters+. Treated in past with oral edta, IV Glutathione, fluconazole
- ▶ Medicaid (Labcorp) labs: 4-3-53, MSH 28, MMP9 747, TGF 6360
- ▶ Treated with Welchol and edta/silver with much improved brain fxn and behavior; MSH went to 43.
- ▶ Was able to start job training and has a girlfriend!



# Case Study 1 Outcome (cont)

- ▶ Adopted son Hunter age 20 from Foster Care, autism and vaccine rxns; past Tx with DMSA that helped a lot, antifungals. VCS+, 5/13 clusters +; function poor
- ▶ Medicaid (Labcorp) labs: 11-3-52, MSH 18, MMP9 540, Homocysteine 28, ADH 0, +Antigliadin Aby
- ▶ Treated with Welchol, edta/silver, Methylfolate, Methyl B12, gluten free.
- ▶ Had great improvement in behavior and brain function; may start job training now!





# Case Study 1 Outcome (cont)

- ▶ Built small home and entire family deteriorated
- ▶ Tested positive for fungi (HERTSMI-2 20) and large amount HH Actinos
- ▶ Fungi removed by remediation company providing tools for DIY remediation, as no water intrusion found; Actinos removed by DIY protocol
- ▶ All doing much better on Welchol again.



# Case Study 2 Outcome

- ▶ Christina Tx with Welchol slowly (1/2 tab tid is most tolerated) due to MCAS/MCSS; placed on diet and supplements. MARCONS -
- ▶ Van cleaned with ozone and biocide on her own, no HEPA used: got worsening Sx
- ▶ Moved all over the country trying to find a safe place to stay
- ▶ Got job in Florida Keys caring for elderly woman in 3 story home. Had some improvement there. Home tested and found with very high fungi and Actinos
- ▶ Woman paid for I-Adapt Airs and IEP inspection; numerous water intrusions found; son does not want to do repairs so she may have to return to her van



# Case Study 3 Outcome: Alea

- ▶ Started CSM, supplements. Progressed to MARCONS Tx. Synthroid started due to TPO > 1000. HERTSMI-2 on home low, can't test work
- ▶ Landlord had work inspected (I wrote letter) and mold found; remediated (not sure how)
- ▶ 5/17 steady improvement (70% better), VCS -; opted for VIP 4/day (credit card): all pain gone, started working out, lost 40 lbs
- ▶ Moved into new home, VIP weaned to 1/day, then off. BHT started after ZRT testing showed high E2, low P. Still on Synthroid. Wanted to get pregnant. Now has 2 children!
- ▶ Still dealing with contaminated salons





# Summary

- ▶ CIRS patients can be successfully treated with modifications to the Shoemaker protocol based on lack of insurance and /or limited finances
- ▶ Whenever possible, the standard CIRS testing should be completed
- ▶ Dealing with Step 1 can be challenging in this population
- ▶ Having a treatment team and assuring frequent follow up is essential for compliance
- ▶ Lifestyle changes are difficult when finances are limited, but not impossible
- ▶ Generic Colesevelam is available from Good Rx and some pharmacies will help with reduced cost edta/silver nasal Tx
- ▶ Many thanks to Microbiology Dx and Joe Musto for the support of our program
- ▶ Wonderful outcomes are possible if you take the time to help those in need



# Vision for the future

- ▶ Grow the SWFFPC into a full time facility
- ▶ Reproduce into other locations in Florida and around the US
- ▶ Partner with donors and other non-profits to create a safe place for financially challenged CIRS patients to stay at no cost, for a limited time, and experience holistic healing
- ▶ Advocate for the vulnerable so that laws will be created to protect them from landlords, employers, and others who don't care that their environments are sick



# What will you do?

- ▶ The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even the least of them*, you did it to Me.' Matthew 25:40
- ▶ Can you look for opportunities to help those with CIRS, in financial need, the least of them?
- ▶ Can you devote some time in your week to help CIRS patients without the resources to attend your practice (tithing) as a way to give back?
- ▶ Can you open a free clinic to help CIRS patients in need?
- ▶ Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' Matthew 25:45





# Contact info

- ▶ Clinic website: [freepainclinic.org](http://freepainclinic.org)
- ▶ Practice website: [fibromyalgiafortmyers.com](http://fibromyalgiafortmyers.com)
- ▶ Personal email: [Doctor4jesus@gmail.com](mailto:Doctor4jesus@gmail.com)
- ▶ Office number: 239-939-3303
- ▶ If you feel led to donate financially to help grow this free clinic, as some of our SM members do, you can do so on the website or contact me
- ▶ For information on the Christian CIRS Network, please contact me or Jenny Johnson at [jenny@simplifiedwellnessdesigns.com](mailto:jenny@simplifiedwellnessdesigns.com)

