



Health Committee calls for better support for Arachnoiditis sufferers

The House of Representatives Health Committee tabled a report in Parliament today calling for better support for people suffering from adhesive arachnoiditis.

Adhesive arachnoiditis is little-known painful condition associated with inflammation and scarring of the arachnoid membrane – one of the delicate membranes surrounding the spine. The Committee heard directly from arachnoiditis sufferers about the debilitating pain the condition causes at a roundtable held last year. Participants attributed their condition to exposure to an oil-based diagnostic agent used in Australia up until the 1980s that allowed clinicians to view the spinal cord and nerves on x-ray.

Chair of the Committee, Jill Hall MP, said that sufferers of adhesive arachnoiditis and their families knew firsthand the devastating impact chronic pain could have on a person's quality of life.

"Adhesive arachnoiditis is a little known condition, even among health professionals, which means getting a diagnosis can be a lengthy and frustrating ordeal. The stress of living with this painful condition, for which there is currently no cure, is increased for some who attribute their adhesive arachnoiditis to medical procedures that were in fact intended to relieve their suffering."

"By holding a roundtable and presenting this report to the Parliament, the Committee aims to raise the profile of adhesive arachnoiditis, highlight the challenges facing sufferers and identify some practical means of assistance for this group," she said.

Copies of the Committee's report, entitled *Living with the pain of adhesive arachnoiditis*, may be obtained from the Committee's website www.aph.gov.au/haa.

For media comment: please contact the Office of Jill Hall MP on (02) 4947 9711.

For all other enquiries: please contact the Committee Secretariat by phone on (02) 6277 4145 or visit the Committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/haa.