Welcome to the MS and Autoimmune Summit Transcript

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Welcome to the Summit

Welcome to the multiple sclerosis and Neuroimmune Summit. I'm doctor Terry Wahls. I am your host. And I am so glad that you are here. So I can empower you with the knowledge and skills that there is so much that you can do to help stop the damage and begin restoring function and getting your life back.

Now, 20 years ago, up walking with my wife a half mile from home. My left leg grows weak dragging it. I hobble home and I see the neurologist. He says, Terry, this could be bad or really, really bad.

Terry Wahls' MS Diagnosis and Decline

At night, as I lay in bed next to Jackie, I think about the 20 years of worsening little face pains that I've already endured, and I pray secretly for a fatal diagnosis because I do not want to become disabled, a burden to my family.

For three weeks we go test to test, to test. Finally, I hear the words multiple sclerosis. I see the very best Ms. center in the country. I take the newest drugs.

Three years later, I hear tilt, recline, wheelchair. My ten year old daughter hugs me is to strip down my face when those electrical face turns on yet again.

But am I really doing all that I can? I am a physician. Night after night I go to PubMed to read the basic science and I developed the theory that mitochondria are the driver of disability and I create this supplement cocktail, support my mitochondria.

The speed of my decline slows and I am so grateful. But I am still declining. I discover a study using electrical stimulation of muscles. I ask my physical therapist, can I try that?

Research, Supplements, and Functional Medicine

He calls it Eastham. He says it's for athletes and that it's painful. And he knows I have so much pain from the mass. But he does give me a test session.

And it hurts. It hurts bad. Really, really bad. But when it's over, I feel great. He says it's because of the endorphins. And we add Eastham to my physical therapy.

I discovered the Institute for Functional Medicine. I take their course on neuro protection. I have a longer list of supplements that support my mitochondria.

And then I have an What if I redesign the paleo diet that I've already been following for five years? What if I redesign it based on all the supplements that I'm taking?

That's more research, and I begin this new way of eating. December 26, 2007. Now, at that time. My trigeminal neuralgia has been relentlessly worse. A breeze by touch when it's turned on can trigger the pain.

Diet Changes and Early Recovery

Chewing. Swallowing can trigger the pain. I'm very afraid that I will soon be permanently on where speaking swallowing would trigger the intense electrical pain.

I am weak, I cannot sit up anymore. I'm in a zero gravity chair with my knees higher than my nose. I have one more

staff. The residents, because I'm too weak to see patients directly.

I have another one at home, and I'm in that zero gravity chair for my meals and times with my family. I am beginning to have brain fog and the fatigue is severe.

I know I will soon be having to apply for medical disability and I start this new way of eating this highly structured paleo diet. December 26th and in January.

At the end of the month. My physical therapist says, Terry, you are getting stronger. He advances and exercises and I realize that my fatigue is less.

My mental clarity improved and then in February, I begin walking first with two walking sticks and then with one. And then I tell my family I would like to try riding my bike, something I have not done for six years.

And Jack says, well, maybe in the fall if things continue to go well. But two weeks later, on Mother's Day, I tell my family I really want to try. And Jackie tells my big 16 year old son, six foot five, football player sack.

You run alongside on the left.

Riding Again and Regaining Hope

And she tells my 13 year old daughter Zeb, you run alongside on the right. We all get in position. Jack gives the signal. I get on my bike and I pedal around the block.

You know that big 16 year old boy, he's crying. Slap my 13 year old. She's crying. Jackie's crying. And I cried. And tears come to my eyes every time I tell that story.

Because it was at that moment that the understanding of secondary progressive multiple sclerosis, I knew it was incomplete, that who knew how much recovery might be possible.

And I began baking a little bit more each day. I did my physical therapy. And then in October, Jackie said, let's sign you up for the courage ride. It's 18.5 miles.

However far you go will be a triumph. And once again, when I cross that finish line, my kids are crying. Jackie's crying, I am crying. It. It changes how I think about disease and health.

It will change the way I practice medicine and the focus of my research. I am Terry Walls. I am clinical professor of medicine at the University of Iowa.

I do clinical research, testing my protocol and others with progressive mass secondary, progressive primary, progressive relapsing remitting.

Clinical Research and the Wahls Protocol

We've been able to show that, yes, other people can implement these complicated regimens and that they can experience reduce fatigue, reduce anxiety, reduce depression, improve quality of life, improve walking function, hand function.

They too can get their lives back. So if I can come back from such profound disability, there absolutely is hope for you that you can come back, that you can get your life back.

And that's why I'm hosting this summit so you can learn from other clinicians, other scientists, that there are interventions under your control that can stop the damage and set the stage for repair, and that you can begin the process of restoring your mental clarity, restoring your energy, reducing your pain, improving your quality of life.

I've written several books that will help you in your journey. The first book, mind you, My Mitochondria told my story and discussed the experiments that I was just beginning to conduct.

My very first study. The next book that I wrote, came out of the Walls Protocol, which describes the Wall Street and the various levels from level 1 to 3 elimination diet, that you can take your current diet and steadily improve it at the pace that you and your family can achieve.

We also talk about the supplements that I use, the detox pathways, the electrical stimulation of muscles in the functional exercises that are used for my recovery, and behavior change, how we can improve our self-care routine so that we can make forward progress and the supplements that are used.

And my rationale? This is much more than just a diet. This is a comprehensive roadmap that I used for my own recovery, and I've used for thousands of others.

Books, Resources, and Closing Welcome

And then we also, because food is such a big part of your healing journey, because the food you eat will become the body, the nerves, the spinal cord, the brain, the cranial nerves that you have tomorrow.

We need proper nutrition to maintain and repair ourselves to help make that easier. We wrote a cookbook, The Walls Protocol cooking for life, that is a marvelous resource to help you learn how to prepare meals.

It's not complicated cooking. It is food that you can make even if you're fatigued. Even if you have only your local grocery store in rural, small town America.

We've had thousands of individuals, hundreds of thousands of individuals whose lives I've touched through my books, who have used my books to deepen their understanding of what is possible, that there is so much that they can do.

And in the gifts for you. We have copies of the first chapter for, mind you, My mitochondria for the walls protocol, and from the cookbook we'll have some recipes from the cookbook as well.

Now, once again, I am so thrilled that you were here. The summit multiple sclerosis and no immune. You will hear from other clinicians and scientists who have used these concepts to help their patients stop the damage, begin their recovery, and begin getting their lives back.

I'm so glad you are here. Welcome. The summer will change your life.