

# Students cope with 'yuppie flu'

By KIMBERLY YOUNG

Maroon, Loyola U.

You're depressed, moody and irrational. Your short-term memory is shot. You're fevered and weak. You're constantly tired but can never fall asleep.

You probably think the feeling is natural — you're a college student.

But your condition might not be natural at all. You might have Chronic Fatigue Syndrome.

CFS, for years ridiculed by the medical community as the "yuppie flu," now is recognized as a legitimate illness, said Anna Davis, a doctor at East Jefferson General Hospital in Louisiana. A new viral illness of an unknown origin, CFS became an epidemic in the last decade, Davis said.

Similar to AIDS in some symptoms, CFS attacks the immune system, causing it to dysfunction, overact, and enable other viruses and bacteria to attack the body.

Although the exact method of transmission is undetermined, CFS often is triggered by stress. College students, frequently stress mongers, are at a high risk of contracting the virus, Davis said.

"In a recent research study, 3,000 CFS patients were found never to experience REM sleep," Davis said. "Symptoms can reduce one's ability to function by 50 percent."

For students, the disease can be devastating. Katie Woods, a junior at Tulane U., knows this all too well. Woods was diagnosed last year with Chronic Epstein-Barr Virus, a disease closely related to CFS.

"In classes, I'd get so anxious and light-headed I would have to run out," Woods said. "I remember one time, I didn't even have the energy to run to class."

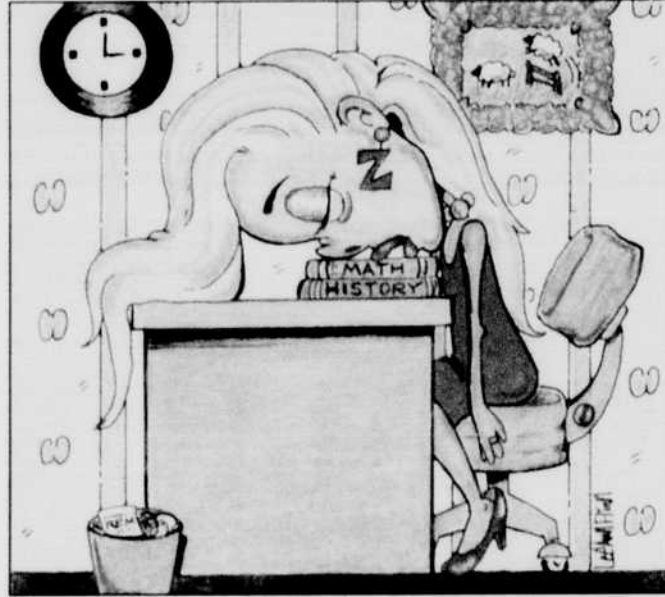
Woods' demanding schedule and the emotional stress of her parents' separation preceded the illness. Because of the disease, Woods dropped several classes and finally withdrew from her pre-med major.

"Some nights I would lie in bed tossing and turning, and I would cry in frustration with being unable to fall asleep," Woods said. "The next day I couldn't get up or I'd feel strung out — kind of a hung-over feeling."

Woods said diagnosing the illness was half the battle. Her boyfriend believed she was having a nervous breakdown, while her friends blamed her feelings on her vegetarian diet.

"The first doctors (I visited) were so quick to slap me on anti-depressants," Woods said. "Nobody believes it; they just say you're stressed out or depressed."

The disease is frustrating for usually ambitious, active people. Patients suffering from the disease have a suicide rate six times higher than non-patients, even though the disease has a mere 5 to 8



LEE ANN FLYNN, AUBURN PLAINSMAN, AUBURN U.

percent mortality rate, Davis said.

"I remember panicking and wondering 'What's wrong with me — am I dying,'" Woods said.

CFS is not curable but can be treated symptomatically. Even though the disease isn't "in the mind," therapy and emotional support has proven extremely helpful, Davis said.

Davis, a leading expert in the study of CFS, theorizes that the cause of the disease is somehow environmentally related. As the body's immune system copes with the increased toxicity of the environment, CFS and other relatively new viruses invade humans in near-epidemic proportions, Davis said.

The disease is known to run in families, and since it is viral, it could be genetically encoded.

A recent national research program on CFS by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control reported receiving 1,000 calls per month from CFS sufferers.

CFS in its varying degrees can be active in a person for up to 14 years, but is capable of becoming dormant, Davis said. In therapy, Woods was taught to view the illness as a gift. She said she has learned to cope and is doing much better this semester.

"I realized that I'm not like everyone else. I get sad looking at children running around and playing," she said. "My friends like going out late drinking, but I have to plan when I will go out and stick to a sleeping schedule."

## Georgia profs search for anti-DUI drug

By ROSALYN THOMPSON

The Red & Black, U. of Georgia

If research by two U. of Georgia professors goes as planned, students someday may be able to buy a powder from the local drugstore that will lower their blood alcohol levels so they can drive home safely.

David Whitmire, a chemical engineer, and Larry Cornelius, a professor of small animal medicine, are conducting lab experiments on a synthetic enzyme designed to combat the effects of alcohol by removing ethanol from the bloodstream.

If it receives FDA approval, Whitmire's enzyme could be available in hospital emergency rooms in the next two to three years.

Whitmire hopes to have his secret formula patented by Christmas. The product could reach the market as early as 1998.

The biggest drawback to the research has been its cost. Whitmire said one dose can cost up to \$20,000.

Whitmire said the enzyme's most important use would be in emergency rooms, where patients must wait for surgery because the mixture of alcohol and anesthesia can be fatal.

But he hopes that the enzyme's potential commercial success will lead to less havoc in those emergency rooms.

"Some people have pointed out to me that it's a license to drink," Whitmire said. "But that's the person's choice. It really only has one function — to sober you up."

# Rollerblades: Transportation trend of the '90s

By TIM WIESENHAN

Kentucky Kernel, U. of Kentucky

College students are careening across campus, leaping over curbs and crashing into trees — and they're loving every minute of it.

Rollerblades, a trademarked name for in-line skates, have replaced rollerskates as the preferred mode of stylish transportation and exercise on campuses across the country.

"Rollerskates are like the '70s," said Arizona State U. rollerblader Tom Tuberty. "Rollerblades are lighter and more maneuverable than regular skates. Rollerblading is a good aerobic non-impact form of exercise. It is definitely going to continue to grow."

More than 1 million pairs of in-line skates have been sold in the U.S. during the last decade, and 2 million pairs are expected to sell this year alone, according to Mary Hougen, a spokeswoman for Rollerblade, the leading manufacturer of in-line skates. Since its introduction in 1981, the Rollerblade has captured more than 50 percent of the in-line skate market.



Dan Kutz and Kevin Krieg from Scottsdale (Ariz.) Community College strap on their Rollerblades for a barrel-jumping session.

"Last year there was barely anybody wearing them," said William Eurego, manager of the Beach Bum skate store in Miami. "If you were rollerblading, people just thought you were weird. This year I get people from ages 10 to 50 renting rollerblades."

The modern skates, which can cost anywhere from \$90 to \$330, are comprised of ankle-snug, nylon padded ski boots bolted to four or five polyurethane wheels. But bladers say the thrill is worth the cost.

"The first time I tried it I felt like I was (ice) skating on cement," said Eric Frederickson, a blader from St. Louis. "When I first got on rollerblades, it was incredible. I get the urge to go blading almost every day."

Rob Hayslett, a sophomore at the U. of Kentucky, calls blading "ferocious."

"You get so hyped doing it," Hayslett said. "It's just something about picking up speed — and you're not doing anything. You're thinking, 'I'm going to die.' You start shaking, and panicking. Your knees start to buckle."

But to those less inclined to such bursts of adrenaline, in-

line skates can offer practical health benefits, like low-impact aerobic cross-training.

"If you run all the time, if you ride all the time, you just start to burn out," said Hayslett. "If you get on (in-line skates), it will save your knees from road shock."

Of course, hurling your body into trees and cars isn't very good for your health, so experienced bladers suggest beginners learn on a parking lot or other uncrowded area so they can adjust to the tricky rubber heel brake on the skates.

Hougen stressed that rollerbladers should always wear a helmet, shoulder pads and knee pads while blading.

"Climbs you slow down and hope you survive to the top; and the descents you hope you survive to the bottom without crashing," Hayslett said.

Leslie Anderson of the State Press, Arizona State U., also contributed to this story.



PHOTOS BY JEORGETTA DOUGLAS, STATE PRESS, ARIZONA STATE U.