

What's Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Essay

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Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease, is a genetic disorder that has proven to be very fatal to those who have it. A flaw in the DNA of a person can result in this disease, taking their life for an unexpected turn. I chose ALS to study because after hearing about several cases and reading Tuesdays With Morrie, I would like to find out what the cause of this disease is, and among other things, what research has been done to help prevent the disease. The disease is transmitted through genetics, and one clinic says that through extensive research, they were able to conclude a few things about ALS; "In ALS, the nerve cells that control the movement of your muscles gradually die, so your muscles progressively weaken and begin to waste away. ALS is inherited in 5 to 10 percent of cases. The other cases appear to occur randomly" (Mayo Clinic). The mutation that causes this disease is found on the sixteenth chromosome, branching off of its short arm. While about ninety percent of ALS cases are random, the other ten percent do make ALS a genetic disease, because it can be inherited. The mutations from genetic and non-inherited ALS are almost identical to each other when examined. Some people who inherit the mutation never exhibit symptoms of ALS, and do not die from the disease, but live their lives fully. Once symptoms start showing for Lou Gehrig's disease, and once the patient tests positive for it, they do not have very long before it starts to change their lives. Perfectly healthy people could go from

being lively and moving all the time, to bed-ridden and having to be fed every meal. It's a terrible disease that forces the host watch themselves die slowly. The simplest tasks that we take for gran..... middle of paper2014, January 22). Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. Retrieved January 25, 2014, from Genetics Home Reference website: <http://ghr.nlm.nih.gov/condition/amyotrophic-lateral-sclerosis>• The ALS Association. (2011, February). Who Gets ALS? Retrieved January 25, 2014, from ALS Association website: <http://www.alsa.org/about-als/who-gets-als.html>• Albom, M. (1997). Tuesdays with Morrie. New York, NY: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.• Jasmin, L. (Ed.). (2012, August 26). Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. Retrieved January 25, 2014, from The New York Times website: <http://www.nytimes.com/health/guides/disease/amyotrophic-lateral-sclerosis/overview.html>• UCSF Memory and Aging Center. (2011, September 21). Single Gene Implicated in FTD/ALS. Retrieved January 25, 2014, from Musings on Memory and Aging website: <http://memory.ucsf.edu/blog/single-gene-implicated-in-ftdals-354/>

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