Sporadic porencephaly is a rare disorder affecting the central nervous system. In porencephaly, cysts or cavities form on the surface of the brain. These cysts or cavities may become filled with cerebrospinal fluid, a colorless fluid that normally surrounds the brain and spinal cord to provide protection and nourishment. The severity and associated symptoms of porencephaly vary dramatically from one person to another based upon the size and exact locations of the fluid-filled cavities or cysts. Some infants develop serious complications shortly after birth; others individuals may have mild symptoms that may go undetected. The exact incidence of sporadic porencephaly in the general population is unknown. Some researchers believe that some patients may go undiagnosed or misdiagnosed, making it difficult to determine the disorder's true frequency in the general population. Sporadic porencephaly affects males and females in equal numbers. A diagnosis of sporadic porencephaly can be made before or after birth through a variety of specialized imaging tests such as an ultrasound, computed tomography (CT) scan, or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). During an ultrasound, reflected sound waves are used to make an image of the developing fetus. During CT scanning, a computer and x-rays are used to create a film showing cross-sectional images of certain tissue structures. An MRI uses a magnetic field and radio waves to produce cross-sectional images of particular organs and bodily tissues.