LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Cerebral metabolism during vegetative state and after recovery to consciousness

One way to approach the study of consciousness is to explore lesional cases in which impairment of consciousness is the prominent clinical sign. Vegetative state is such a condition wherein awareness is abolished whereas arousals persist. It can be diagnosed clinically soon after a brain injury and may be reversible (as in the following case report) or progress to a persistent vegetative state or death. The distinction between vegetative state and persistent vegetative state is that the second is defined as a vegetative state that has continued or endured for at least 1 month. We present a patient who developed a vegetative state after carbon monoxide poisoning and in whom we had the opportunity to measure brain glucose metabolism distribution during the vegetative state and after recovery to consciousness. Using [F]fluorodeoxyglucose (FDG) PET and statistical parametric mapping (SPM) we compared both patient’s sets to a normal control population. Our findings offer an insight into the neural correlates of “awareness”, pointing to a critical role for posterior associative cortices in consciousness.

A 40 year old right handed woman attempted suicide through CO intoxication and was found unconscious. She was treated with hyperbaric oxygen but evolved to a vegetative state diagnosed according to the following criteria: (1) spontaneous eye opening without evidence of awareness of the environment; (2) no evidence of reproducible voluntary behavioural responses to any stimuli; (3) no evidence of language comprehension or expression; (4) intermittent wakefulness and behaviourally assessed sleep-wake cycles; (5) normal cardiorespiratory function and blood pressure control; (6) preserved pupillary, oculocephalic, corneal, and vestibulo-ocular reflexes. Brain MRI performed 14 days after admission was normal. Electroencephalography showed a 6 Hz basal activity with more pronounced slowing on the left parietal regions. Auditory evoked potentials of the median nerve showed normal latency and amplitude of P14 and N20 potentials without any late cortical components. After remaining in a vegetative state for 19 days the patient regained consciousness. Her sequelae consisted of a bilateral spastic paraparesis of upper and lower limbs. Neuropsychological examination 1 month after admission showed an attention deficit with moderate impairment of short term memory.

One year after the accident she showed a spastic gait with altered fine motor function, most prominently on the right, a slurred speech, and minor short term memory disturbances. FDG-PET was performed during the vegetative state (day 15 after admission) and after recovery to consciousness (day 57).

The control population consisted of 48 drug free, healthy volunteers, aged from 18 to 76 years (mean: 42 (SD 21) years).

The study was approved by the ethics committee of the University of Liège. Informed consent was obtained by the husband of the patient and for all control subjects. Five to 10 mCi FDG was injected intravenously; PET data were obtained on a Siemens CTI 951 R 16/31 scanner in bidimensional mode. Arterial blood samples were drawn during the whole procedure and cerebral metabolic glucose rates (CMRGlu) were calculated for all subjects. PET data were analysed using SPM software (SPM96 version; Welcome Department of Cognitive Neurology, Institute of Neurology, London, UK). The use of SPM to assess between subject (rather than within subject) variability is unlikely to alter the relevance of our results given their high degree of significance. Data from each subject were normalised to a standard stereotactic space and then smoothed with a 16 mm full width half maximum isotropic kernel. The analysis identified brain regions where glucose metabolism was significantly lower in each patient scan compared with the control group. The resulting foci were characterised in terms of peak height over the entire volume analysed at a threshold of corrected p<0.05.

During the vegetative state, average grey matter glucose metabolism was 38% lower than in controls (4.5 ± 7.3 (SD 1.4) mg/100 g/min). No substantial change in mean CMRGlu was found after recovery (4.7 mg/100 g/min). During the vegetative state, significant regional CMRGlu decreases were found in the left and right superior parietal lobule; the left inferior parietal lobule; the precuneus; the left superior occipital, superior and middle temporal gyri; and the premotor and postcentral and precentral cortex (figure, yellow colour). After recovery, metabolic impairment was confined to the left and right precentral and postcentral gyri and premotor cortices (figure, blue colour).

This case report offers an insight into the neural correlates of human consciousness (at least, external awareness as it can be assessed at the patient’s bedside). Given that global glucose utilisation levels remained essentially the same, the recovery of consciousness seems related to a modification of the regional distribution of brain function rather than to the global resumption of cerebral metabolism. The main decreases in metabolism seen during the vegetative state but not after recovery were found in parietal areas, including the precuneus. This is in agreement with postmortem findings in persistent vegetative state, in which involvement of the association cortices is reported as a critical neuroanatomical substrate and with PET studies in postanoxic syndrome, in which the parieto-occipital cortex showed the most consistent impairment. The functions of these areas are manifold: lateral parietal areas are involved in spatial perception and attention, working memory, mental imagery, and language, whereas the precuneus is activated in episodic memory retrieval, modulation of visual perception by mental imagery, and attention. Our data point to a critical role for these posterior associative cortices in the emergence of conscious experience.

STEVEN LAUREYS
CHRISTIAN LEMAIRE
PIERRE MAQUET
Cyclotron Research Centre, University of Liège, Sart Tilman, 4000 Liège, Belgium

CHRISTOPHE PHILLIPS
Institute of Cognitive Neurology, University College London, Alexandra House, 17 Queens Square, London WC1N 3AR, England, UK

GEORGE FRANCK
Department of Neurology, CHU Liège Sart Tilman B-33, 4000 Liège, Belgium

Correspondence to: Dr Pierre Maquet, Cyclotron Research Centre (B30), University of Liège, Sart Tilman, 4000 Liège, Belgium Telephone 0032 43 66 36 87; fax 0032 43 66 29 46; email maquet@pet.crc.ac.be

Electrical inexcitability of nerves and muscles in severe infantile spinal muscular atrophy

Spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) is one of the most common fatal autosomal recessive disorders, characterised by progressive degeneration of anterior horn cells. Before the advent of genetic testing, the diagnosis of SMA was based on clinical, histopathological, and electrophysiological features. In 1992, the International SMA Consortium defined diagnostic criteria of proximal SMA based on clinical findings. In SMA type I (severe; Werdnig-Hoffmann disease), affected persons have onset of symptoms before 6 months of age and are never able to sit without support. Electromyography demonstrates denervation features. In early 1995, the candidate gene, the survival motor neuron (SMN) gene, was identified, making the confirmation of SMA by DNA analysis possible.

With the availability of a genetic test for SMA, many investigators are refining the diagnostic criteria published by the Consortium. Studies involving hundreds of patients with SMA have disclosed a subset of patients who fulfill at least one exclusion criterion defined by the Consortium. In SMA type I, an infant with severe SMA who fulfilled two exclusion criteria and also showed abnormal potentials in all nerves as well as muscles. This report will further delineate the wide range of phenotypes for this particular gene mutation.

A 76-year-old male infant was born at term. Fetal movements were noted at 13 weeks of gestation. Chorionic villus sampling at 10 weeks of gestation disclosed normal chromosomal decreases. Decreased fetal movement and polyhydramnios were noted at about 34 weeks of gestation. At delivery, the infant was cyanotic with no respiratory effort and was subsequently intubated. On physical examination, the infant had no spontaneous movements. He opened his eyes with brief fixation but no following. Tongue fasciculations were present. Other cranial nerves seemed intact. Mild flexion contractures of both elbows, knees, and ankles were noted. Tone was flaccid in the upper and lower limbs, and there was no movement response to painful stimulus. Deep tendon reflexes were absent. Brain MRI disclosed mild diffuse cortical atrophy. His EMG was severely abnormal, with widespread fibrillations and absent voluntary motor units except in the genioglossus, where mildly neurogenic motor units with decreased recruitment were seen. Stimulation of the median, ulnar, tibial, and peroneal nerves with a maximal stimulus resulted in no clinical or electrical response. The biceps brachii and rectus femoris muscles were electrically inexcitable by direct needle stimulation. Median, ulnar, and sural sensory potentials were not obtainable. DNA testing showed a homozygous deletion of exons 7 and 8 of the telomeric SMN gene, all three siblings showed a large deletion in the region that includes all alleles of the multi-copy markers Ag1-CA and C212, localised at the 5’ end of the two SMN gene copies. It has been postulated that the severity of disease may be correlated to the extent of a deletion involving the SMN gene and the multicyclop markers. The infant in our report with SMA type I showed electrical inexcitability of motor nerves as well as the characteristic alteration of the SMN gene. Although it has been shown for some time that histological studies that sensory systems are involved in SMA, electrophysiological sensory findings have been previously reported only once. Sensory nerve conduction velocity was tested in an infant with severe SMA and showed no recordable potential, but the infant in our report also exhibited universal absence of sensory potentials. In both cases, DNA analysis disclosed the 5q deletion. It is unclear whether this finding represents a distinct entity or merely the severe end of classic Werdnig-Hoffmann disease. The diagnostic criteria produced by the International SMA Consortium currently lists “absence of sensory nerve conduction potentials” as an exclusion criterion. Our finding of absent sensory potentials in a 5q deletion established case of SMA indicates further need for revision of the Consortium criteria. Studies involving larger numbers of patients with SMA have identified cases of SMA variants. These patients were diagnosed as infantile SMA by the presence of proximal weakness and atrophy, hypotonia, and evidence of neurogenic alterations in EMG and muscle biopsy. In addition, these patients also exhibited one of the exclusion criteria defined by the Consortium—for example, diaphragmatic weakness, involvement of the CNS, or arthrogryposis. Although these patients did not show the typical SMA deletion and were therefore probably not linked to chromosome 5q, they could have had point mutations. The infant in our report showed no respiratory effort after birth, indicating diaphragmatic weakness. He did, however, possess the characteristic SMN gene alterations. This finding suggests that diaphragmatic weakness should be reconsidered as an exclusion criterion by the Consortium.

The clinical e

In addition to a homozygous deletion of

Additional references:

Acute overdosage and intoxication with carbidopa/levodopa can be detected in the subacute stage by measurement of 3-omethylpyridine

Although the effects of a chronic overdosage with levodopa are well known, few cases of acute intoxication have been described. A particular problem in establishing a diagnosis of levodopa overdosage is the relatively short half life in the circulation of levodopa. If there is a delay in bringing an acutely intoxicated patient to hospital, perhaps due to late discovery, the blood concentration of levodopa could already be normal in the relevant period to the peak levodopa concentration in Parkinson’s disease therapy) after 6-8 hours. Depending on the extent of the overdosage, the time could be even shorter. This report describes the clinical effects and the plasma concentrations of levodopa and specific metabolites over a period of 132.5 hours after ingestion of 30 tablets of carbidopa/levodopa (30 mg/200 mg tablets).

A 76 year old patient had a pre-existing mild akinetic rigid Parkinson’s syndrome, which had been treated for the past 1.5 years with 3x1 tablets of carbidopa/levodopa (50 mg/200 mg) a day without a substantial response. The weight of the patient was 74 kg. A known chronic obstructive airway disease was treated with a home oxygen appliance. At about 8.30 pm, the patient had attempted suicide by taking 30 tablets of carbidopa/levodopa. About 0.50 lbs of tablets was ingested. He appeared psychiatrally altered, crying without reason, anxious, and depressed. After about 30 minutes he was increasingly inadequate, with short, and subeuphoric, and was experiencing visual hallucinations; he was restless, tossing and turning, and getting out of bed. He did not represent peak dose dyskinesia or other extrapyramidal clinical features. At 10.00 pm he showed bilaterally maximally dilated pupils. The muscle stretch reflexes were lively, there were no pyramidal tract signs, and he did not show any signs of Parkinson’s syndrome or dyskinesia. Arterial hypotension and sinus tachycardia could be registered.

After an empty box of Striaton (carbidopa/levodopa, 50 mg/200 mg) was found in the patient’s flat, 1 g of carbon was given by stomach tube after gastric lavage. The ECG was carried out before the diagnosis of intoxication had been made; it showed a pronounced subcortical arteriosclerotic encephalopathy with reduced brain volume. The patient was moved to the medical intensive care unit and observed for 24 hours. The ECG showed a P pulmonale, but no other unusual features. Echocardiography showed normal right and left ventricular function with suspicion of right ventricular hypertro-
Distribution into muscles rather than metabolism may largely determine the plasma half-life of levodopa and explain why this was only slightly altered with overdose. The measured peak concentration of 66 763 ng/ml is about 30 times higher than the peak concentration to be expected after taking one tablet of carbidopa/levodopa (50 mg/200 mg). It is apparent that the 30 tablets did not interfere with absorption or lead to a gastrointestinal paralysis due to the high dose of levodopa; the relation between amount ingested and plasma concentration seems to be linear, at least in this dose range.

We conclude from these findings that in cases of suspected levodopa intoxication some hours previously, it could be important to measure the concentration of 3-\(^\text{O}\)-methyl-dopa, so as not to overlook an overdose with levodopa, which may be due to a suicide attempt. In addition to the diagnostic uncertainty in relation to the immediate treatment of the patient, this would also have an effect on further psychiatric and psychological therapy.

H J STUERENBURG
BG H SCHOSER
Neurological Department, University Hospital Hamburg-Eppendorf, Hamburg, Germany

Correspondence to: Dr Hans Joerg Stuerenberg, Neurological Department, University Hospital Hamburg-Eppendorf, Martinistrasse 52, 20246 Hamburg, Germany. Telephone 0049 40 4717 4832; fax 0049 40 4717 5086; email stuerenburg@uke.uni-hamburg.de


The use of olanzapine for movement disorder in Huntington’s disease: a first case report

Movement disorder is a prominent feature of Huntington’s disease and consists of involuntary and voluntary components as well as associated bradykinesia. Pharmacological treatment is problematic because of the side effects of the drugs used, which may further compromise cognitive functioning and mobility. Patients are often not subjectively aware of their movements but can be considerably disabled by them and carers are often distressed and enquire about treatment options. If drug treatment is considered it is important to achieve the maximum improvement in movements with the minimum of negative side effects. This paper describes the effect of olanzapine on movements when other treatment options had been ineffectual or limited by side effects.

Huntington’s disease is a hereditary progressive neurodegenerative disease. It consists of a triad of symptoms comprising motor, psychological, and cognitive abnormalities. The motor component consists of involuntary choreiform movements and increasing difficulties with voluntary movement. The degree of the involuntary movements is variable but in some patients can be very marked. Progression over time of the movement disorder in Huntington’s disease can be monitored using the quantitative neurological examination (QNE). This measure has three subscales, an eye movement scale, a motor impairment scale (MIS) quantifying voluntary motor control, and a chorea scale measuring involuntary movement.

Pharmacological control of the symptoms has been shown to be effective with dopamine antagonists, but their use is limited because of the side effects. Glutamatergic therapy is the most problematic of these as sedation, cognitive slowing, increased mobility problems, and hypotension. The inability of traditional dopamine antagonists to improve functional capacity, despite ameliorating possibly due to suppression of voluntary motor activity.

Tardive dyskinesia has occasionally been reported in patients with Huntington’s disease treated with these drugs. The atypical antipsychotic clozapine has shown to be effective in improving the movement disorder. However, in a double blind randomised trial of clozapine which included patients who were already receiving traditional antipsychotic medication, a group who had not received drug treatments for their movement disorder, chorea and tachycardia to the raised concentrations of noradrenaline, adrenaline, and dopamine were raised. The time course of the concentrations of levodopa and metabolites 2.5 hours after ingestion, and again after 9, 14.5, 34, and 100 hours was calculated at 16.7 hours.

We conclude from these findings that in cases of suspected levodopa intoxication some hours previously, it could be important to measure the concentration of 3-\(^\text{O}\)-methyl-dopa, so as not to overlook an overdose with levodopa, which may be due to a suicide attempt. In addition to the diagnostic uncertainty in relation to the immediate treatment of the patient, this would also have an effect on further psychiatric and psychological therapy.
risperidone. This was started at a dose of 1mg twice daily, increasing to a dose of 1mg four times a day over a period of 2 weeks, stopped after a brief period. He developed hypoten-
sion (blood pressure 100/60 mg Hg), com-
plaining of dizziness after the initial dose. His blood pressure remained stable, although low, after this and as there was improvement in his movements the drug was continued. However, he decided to stop the risperidone after 4 months because of his subjective experience of slowed thinking and occasional dizziness. A repeated trial of sulphuride was carried out in March 1997. Sulphuride was started at a dose of 200 mg twice a day and increased to a total daily dose of 1000 mg over 2 weeks. He was on sulphuride for 4 weeks with no improvement in his movements, so it was discontinued. The patient continued to experience low mood and after the discontinu-
tion of sulphuride, his antiparkinsonian drug was changed to lofepramine commencing at 70 mg once a day and increasing after a few days to 140 mg daily. There were no changes noted in his movements during this change.

Although the patient was subjectively una-
ware of the extent of his movements his eve-
ryday life continued to be a problem such as travelling abroad by air were more limited and activities he wanted to pur-
port. In the absence of a cure for Huntington’s disease the patient to use drug treatments for the movement disorder. In those patients who have severe movements, however, a trial of treatment may be appropriate and continued if a clear benefit has been achieved. Neuro-
ological monitoring and the patient’s own per-
ception of the effect of the drug must be taken into account.

The mechanism by which olanzapine may have beneficial effects is unclear. Olanzapine has been shown to have high affinity for a large number of receptors including D1, D2, 5HT2A, 5HT2C, 5 HT3, a-1- adrenergic, histamine H1, and 5 muscarinic receptors. This binding profile is similar to clozapine, another atypical antipsychotic drug, but substantially different to the conventional antipsychotic haloperidol.1 Preferential loss of D2 projection neurons which are involved in a feedback loop normally active in the suppression of invol-
untary movements is thought to be the patho-
physiological basis of chorea in patients with Huntington’s disease.2 The D2 antagonist properties of olanzapine may explain its pos-
sible effects in the improvement of chorea. However, the effect at other receptors such as D4 may also be important, as D4 receptor density has been shown to be raised in Hunt-
ington’s disease, therefore the D4/D2 ratio of activity may also be relevant. Differences in binding profile across a range of receptors may explain clinical differences in outcome when comparing different antipsychotic drugs.

This case report indicates that olanzapine may be a useful addition to the treatments for movement disorder, for some patients, and controlled trials of its use in Huntington’s disease would be welcome.

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**Transient hiccups after posteroventral pallidotomy for Parkinson’s disease**

Hiccup is defined as an abrupt intermittent, involuntary, contraction of the diaphragmatic and external (inspiratory) intercostal mus-
cles, with inhibition of expiratory intercostal mus-
cles, and the gastrointestinal tract. Hiccups may result from various structural or functional disorders of the medulla, the affer-
ent or efferent nerves to the respiratory mus-
cles, and the gastrointestinal tract.3 6 Newson

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**Table: Patient characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patient</th>
<th>Age at surgery</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Years with PD</th>
<th>H and Y staging</th>
<th>UPDRS off saline</th>
<th>UPDRS off pallidotomy</th>
<th>Pallidotomy side</th>
<th>Transient side effects</th>
<th>Mediation additional to levodopa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>57/NP</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Tryptizol, temezapam, alprazolam, apomorphine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2/2.5</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Trihexifenidyl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>pergolide, amantadine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>45/22</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>pergolide, selegeline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>69/36</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>pergolide, selegeline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>48/27</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>55/NP</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Clozapine, temezapam, cisapride</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*H and Y=Hoehn and Yahr; †UPDRS off=unified Parkinson’s disease rating scale part 3 (motor examination), in a standardised off state, 12 hours without antipar-
kinson medication; NP=not performed.*
localisation. Patients started with a short schedule of corticosteroids (5 days) the night before surgery.

The hiccups started immediately after the operation or the next day, were intermittent, and the bouts of hiccup of six patients, with a duration of hours, resolved within 3 days after the procedure. One patient complained of yawning more often and frequent bouts of hiccup for 6 months.

Five patients were men. All patients were right handed. The mean age at surgery was 54 years and the mean duration of Parkinson's disease was 12 years. All patients were taking levodopa. In four patients the hiccupps appeared after a left sided pallidotomy. Patient 2 had a right sided thalamotomy 4 years before the pallidotomy. Patient 5 underwent a left sided pallidotomy 10 months before the right sided pallidotomy which caused the hiccupps. The pallidotomy improved parkinsonism in the "off" state (table), contralateral dyskinesias, and pain accompanying Parkinson's disease. Six patients had transient adverse events: four patients had transient periorbital and two a slight transient dysarthria.

In the first six patients, and showed that in five patients the lesions were located in the posterior part of the globus pallidus pars externa (GPe) and interna (figure). In patient 5 the lesion was situated slightly more anterior in the GPe and putamen. In patient 3 there was a small separate lesion more dorsal, probably an infarct.

We never encountered hiccupps in 150 other stereotactic procedures for Parkinson's disease, such as thalamotomies or deep brain stimulation electrode implantation in the thalamus and therefore it is unlikely that medication or positive contrast medium ven-triculography with Iohexol evoked the hiccupps.

A possible cause for the transient hiccupps could be the lesion in the ventral medial segment of the globus pallidus or pressure, due to oedema, on an adjacent structure like the internal capsule or putamen. We could not find other reports of hiccupps as an adverse event after functional stereotactic surgical interventions, nor after lesions of other aetiology involving the striatum. Based on our experience we hypothesise that the globus pallidus or a neighbouring structure may be involved in a supramedullary system involved in triggering hiccupps.

Letters, Correspondence, Book reviews, Correction

Five months after left sided pallidotomy, MRI of patient 6: (A) transversal slice at the level of the anterior commissure and (B) 6 mm more ventral.
Comparison of stroke survivors with and without emotionalism, assessed in hospital 1 month after stroke

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No emotionalism (n=19)</th>
<th>Emotionalism (n=41)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GHQ-12*</td>
<td>3.2 (2.4)</td>
<td>5.3 (3.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovery locus of control scale</td>
<td>33.2 (5.3)</td>
<td>34.1 (4.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of events scale intrusion subscale**</td>
<td>2.9 (4.6)</td>
<td>9.2 (6.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of events scale avoidance subscale*</td>
<td>4.7 (4.6)</td>
<td>9.9 (6.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASS Fighting war subscale</td>
<td>49.1 (4.2)</td>
<td>48.6 (4.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASS Anxious preoccupation subscale**</td>
<td>22.2 (2.8)</td>
<td>25.2 (4.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASS Fatalism subscale*</td>
<td>20.0 (1.9)</td>
<td>21.3 (2.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASS Avoidance subscale</td>
<td>1.7 (0.8)</td>
<td>1.9 (0.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASS Helplessness/helplessness subscale**</td>
<td>10.9 (2.5)</td>
<td>14.1 (3.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MASS = Mental adjustment to stroke scale.

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, t-tests.

The table shows the comparison of stroke survivors with and without emotionalism, assessed in hospital 1 month after stroke. The table includes GHQ-12, recovery locus of control scale, impact of events scale intrusion subscale, impact of events scale avoidance subscale, MASS fighting war subscale, MASS anxious preoccupation subscale, MASS fatalism subscale, MASS avoidance subscale, and MASS helplessness/helplessness subscale. The results suggest that stroke survivors with emotionalism have higher GHQ-12 scores compared to those without emotionalism. The study highlights the importance of emotionalism as an important maintaining factor in the recovery process of stroke survivors.

Letters, Correspondence, Book reviews, Correction

“Stiff limb syndrome” refers to the focal form of SMS when one or more distal limbs are involved; two of their patients were also anti-GAD antibody positive, but none were tested for antibodies to amphiphysin or identified as having an underlying neoplasia. We present a patient clinically consistent with the stiff limb syndrome who was found to have autoantibody to GAD and breast cancer.

A 68 year old woman presented with a 1 month history of painful spasms in her legs. Cramps were associated with tactile stimuli and emotional upset. Within weeks, ambulation began at the left and then right ankle, making ambulation difficult. Her medical history was significant for Graves’ disease treated with thyroxine and radioactive iodine, and hyperlipidaemia. She was a chronic smoker.

General examination was noteworthy for lymphadenopathy in the right axilla. Her mental status was worse during periods of lower extremity spasms, during which she became anxious, diaphoretic, and tachycardic. Cranial nerve and motor evaluations were unremarkable, but assessment of the left leg, due to painful spasms elicited by light touch, was difficult. Inversion and plantar flexion were essentially fixed at the left ankle but could be overcome on the right. Deep tendon reflexes were 3+ in the upper and lower extremities, with sustained clonus at the right ankle. Sensory examination was normal and paresthesias of the distal lower extremities, and coordination testing were grossly normal. No hyperlordosis or myoclonus was noted. Gait was limited due to ankle posturing.

The laboratory evaluation was noteworthy for a CSF with increased IgG indices (2.5, 3.4; normal, 0.2–0.8) and oligoclonal bands (5, 5) but no pleocytosis. Serological testing for anti-Hu, anti-Yo, and anti-Ri antibodies was unremarkable, and the haemoglobin A1C was 6.6 (5.6–7.7)%. Skin biopsy at three sites on the patient’s leg showed diminished epidermal nerve fibre density and terminal axonal swelling distally, consistent with a small fibre sensory neuropathy.

The patient would not tolerate EMG. Magnetic resonance images of the brain and the entire spinal cord were normal. Fine needle aspiration of the left tissue, thus ruled out metastatic adenocarcinoma. On an open surgical procedure, infiltrating duct carcinoma of the breast was identified. Anti-GAD antibodies were positive by both chemical assay and immuno precipitation, but antibodies to amphiphysin were not detected by immunocytochemistry, immunoprecipitation, or western blotting (Dr P De Camilli, Yale University).

Ongoing therapy with clonazepam and a trial of oral dexamethasone did not improve the lower extremity symptoms. The patient’s ankle posturing continued a slow progression to marked inversion, with spontaneous exten-

* suffered from a severe progressive motor disorder characterised by rigidity, and uncontrollable contractions leading to distorted posturing. The disorder has been associated with the autoantibodies, glutamic acid decarboxylase (GAD), and amphiphysin, which are cytoplasmic proteins in neurons of the CNS. A large series of patients with SMS found that most had autoantibodies against GAD, whereas amphiphysin is presumably the predominant autoantigen in paraneoplastic SMS. Recently, Beaudet et al presented four patients with a stiff leg syndrome marked by progressive rigidity and spasms of the lower extremities. This group of patients tested negative for anti-GAD antibody by immunoprecipitation and demonstrated distinct electrophysiologi-

* to EMG. Magnetic resonance images of the brain and the entire spinal cord were normal. Fine needle aspiration of the left tissue, thus ruled out metastatic adenocarcinoma. On an open surgical procedure, infiltrating duct carcinoma of the breast was identified. Anti-GAD antibodies were positive by both chemical assay and immunoprecipitation, but antibodies to amphiphysin were not detected by immunocytochemistry, immunoprecipitation, or western blotting (Dr P De Camilli, Yale University).

Ongoing therapy with clonazepam and a trial of oral dexamethasone did not improve the lower extremity symptoms. The patient’s ankle posturing continued a slow progression to marked inversion, with spontaneous extension and plantar flexion of the left ankle. Microscopically, the lumbar cord had mild reactive gliosis in the anterior horns but no hyperlordosis or myoclonus was noted. Gait was limited due to ankle posturing.

The laboratory evaluation was noteworthy for a CSF with increased IgG indices (2.5, 3.4; normal, 0.2–0.8) and oligoclonal bands (5, 5) but no pleocytosis. Serological testing for anti-Hu, anti-Yo, and anti-Ri antibodies was unremarkable, and the haemoglobin A1C was 6.6 (5.6–7.7)%. Skin biopsy at three sites on the patient’s leg showed diminished epidermal nerve fibre density and terminal axonal swelling distally, consistent with a small fibre sensory neuropathy. The patient would not tolerate EMG. Magnetic resonance images of the brain and the entire spinal cord were normal. Fine needle aspiration of the left tissue, thus ruled out metastatic adenocarcinoma. On an open surgical procedure, infiltrating duct carcinoma of the breast was identified. Anti-GAD antibodies were positive by both chemical assay and immuno precipitation, but antibodies to amphiphysin were not detected by immunocytochemistry, immunoprecipitation, or western blotting (Dr P De Camilli, Yale University).

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with the "diffuse" axial and subsequent proximal muscle distribution of the classic disorder. Our patient differs from those reported with stiff leg syndrome in that an occult malignancy was present. Unfortunately, we were unable to obtain electrophysiological studies for comparison. The search for a paraneoplastic process was based on the findings of axillary lymphadenopathy and an abnormal CSF. Our patient is only the second reported patient with paraneoplastic SMS associated with anti-GAD antibody; the other had upper limb rigidity in the setting of breast cancer and additionally mounted an immune response to amphiphysin.

Paraneoplastic processes can affect any component of the nervous system and, occasionally, multiple levels, as in the syndrome of sensory neuronopathy-encephalomyelitis. Our patient's findings were not entirely consistent with criteria for classic SMS in that an apparent encephalopathy and a small fibre neuropathy were identified—for example, her dysautonomia (tachycardia and relative hypertension) during spasms may have been a manifestation of involvement of small fibres. The role of autoantibodies in the pathogenesis of SMS and cancer is unclear. Via its probable function in endocytosis, amphiphysin has been postulated to play a part in the regulation of growth factor internalisation; however, the absence of an autoimmune response to this protein was unremarkable. An examination of renal function, blood glucose, and CSF study were normal. Laboratory studies of arterial blood gas (under assisted ventilation), electrolytes, liver function, blood glucose, and CSF study were unremarkable. An examination of renal function indicated chronic renal insufficiency with mild azotaemia (urea nitrogen 70 mg/dl, creatinine 9.1 mg/dl). An EEG, recorded 18 hours after the onset of symptoms when the neurological condition was unchanged, showed posterior dominant alpha waves intermixing with trains of short duration, diffuse theta waves. When brief noxious stimuli were applied to the sternum, they were replaced transiently by beta activities. The patient was given a course of haemodialysis according to the set schedule (haemodialysis started 22 hours after onset). The patient's condition improved dramatically.


**Tetrodotoxin intoxication in a ureaemic patient**

Tetrodotoxin intoxication results from ingestive puffer fish or other animals containing the toxin. Clinical presentation is mainly acute motor weakness and respiratory paralysis. Death is common in the worst affected victims. Although the severity of the symptoms generally depends on the amount of toxin ingested, it may be influenced by the victim's medical condition, as described in this report. The patient was a 52 year old ureaemic woman. The uraemia was of undetected aetiology. Over the past 3 years she has received regular haemodialysis. One day both she and her husband, a healthy 55 year old man, ate a fish soup. About 2 hours after the meal she developed a headache and a lingual and circumoral tingling sensation and numbness at the distal parts of all four limbs. She was dizzy and unsteady, had difficulty in swallowing, and became very weak. She was taken to the emergency service and was placed on machine assisted ventilation as respiratory distress and cyanosis developed. Her husband remained asymptomatic throughout this time.

The patient's condition kept on deteriorating, developing eventually into a comatoselike state with no spontaneous or reflexive eye opening or limb movement within 30 minutes of intubation. On neurological examination, the pupillary light reflex was absent and oculocephalic manoeuvre elicited no ocular movements. All four limbs were areflexic and Babinski's signs were absent. Brain CT and laboratory studies of arterial blood gas (under assisted ventilation), electrolytes, liver function, blood glucose, and CSF study were unremarkable. An examination of renal function indicated chronic renal insufficiency with mild azotaemia (urea nitrogen 70 mg/dl, creatinine 9.1 mg/dl). An EEG, recorded 18 hours after the onset of symptoms when the neurological condition was unchanged, showed posterior dominant alpha waves intermixing with trains of short duration, diffuse theta waves. When brief noxious stimuli were applied to the sternum, they were replaced transiently by beta activities. The findings suggested that the profound neurological dysfunction might be peripheral in origin. The patient was given a course of haemodialysis according to the set schedule for ureaemia at 21 hours after onset of the symptoms. Her condition improved dramatically.
ologically within an hour. She could open her eyes and she communicated and answered questions correctly by blinking. Pupillary reflex recovered and voluntary eye movements were limited only at the extreme lateral gaze. Muscle power was grade 3 and 4 in the proximal and distal muscles of all four limbs. Tendon reflexes were absent. She was taken off mechanical ventilation the next day. Her clinical condition continued to improve and her symptoms subsided in a stepwise pattern, in response to each course of haemodialysis (figure). When recalling, she could remember certain events such as the recording of the EEG, but was “too weak to move” at that time. She regained her initial strength by the time she was discharged on day 16.

When analysing the remains of the cooked fish (identified as *Yongieichthys nebulosus*), tetrodotoxin was demonstrated by thin layer chromatography, high performance liquid chromatography, and cellulose acetate membrane electrophoresis. Toxicity was assayed by using Institute of Cancer Research strain adult male mice and the toxicity score was 25 mouse units (MU)/g in fish muscle (1 MU = 1 mg of the TCR standard). Tetrodotoxin exerts its effect through binding with and blocking the voltage dependent sodium channel. The voltage clamp experiments showed that tetrodotoxin diminished sodium inward current responsible for the depolarisation of excitable membrane. The gating properties of the sodium channel, such as the activation and inactivation mechanism, are not altered—that is, the sodium channel is not permanently damaged and its function recovers when the bound toxin is released. In uraemia, ion conductance through the sodium channel is also impaired. Sodium permeability through excitable membranes is reduced and small inward sodium current and reduced action potential amplitudes are noted in experimental uraemic nephropathy. By contrast with the effects of tetrodotoxin, uraemia changes the basic property of the sodium channel by an increased inactivation and an impaired activation mechanism. The excitability of peripheral nerves will be more significantly depressed when these two conditions coincide. The synergistic effect of uraemia and tetrodotoxin is obvious in this incident in which the patient and her husband ingested roughly an equal amount of two different fish. The fatal dose in human beings is about 200 μg/kg body weight (about 2200 μg/60 kg body weight) body weight (body weights of the patient and her husband were 54.5 and 62 kg respectively)—and caused no clinical evidence of poisoning in the healthy person. It was of interest that the CNS was relatively spared from the toxicity as the EEG showed a posterior dominant, prominently reactive alpha rhythm and the patient retained consciousness when the symptoms were at their most severe.

One of the most striking clinical features in our patient was the response to haemodialysis. Despite a small amount of toxin ingested, the dramatic improvement of her clinical condition was most likely attributed to the rapid elimination of absorbed toxin in the course of haemodialysis, rather than spontaneous recovery. The physical and chemical properties of tetrodotoxin are also amenable to haemodialysis. Traditionally, the management of tetrodotoxin intoxication is mainly supportive, such as gastric lavage to remove unabsorbed toxin and machine assisted ventilation when respiration is severely affected. We suggest that haemodialysis may be an effective method in the treatment of tetrodotoxin intoxication.

MIN-YU LAN
SHUN-CHEN CHEN
Department of Neurology, Kaohsiung Medical College,
Kaohsiung City, Taiwan

DENG-FU WU
Department of Food Science, National Taiwan Ocean University, Keelung City, Taiwan

Correspondence to: Dr Shun-Sheng Chen,
Department of Neurology, Kaohsiung Medical College Hospital, 100 Shih-Chung 1st Road,
Kaohsiung City 807, Taiwan. Telephone 00886 7 3121101 ext 6771; fax 00886 7 323423; emil sheng@mail.nyu.edu.tw

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Relation between critical illness polyneuropathy and axonal Guillain-Barré syndrome

The clinical entity critical illness polyneuropathy occurs almost exclusively in patients in critical care units and has been characterised as a complication of sepsis and multiple organ failure. Critical illness polyneuropathy may be a common cause of the difficulty in weaning patients from the ventilator, particularly those who show intractable ventilator dependence. All the measures used to prevent or treat sepsis and multiple organ failure are the main methods now used to deal with critical illness polyneuropathy. Knowledge of this type of polyneuropathy is increasing; in reviewing the patients with Guillain-Barré syndrome showed the presence of primary axonal degeneration of the motor and sensory fibres, mainly distally, with no evidence of inflammation. Zochodne et al (including Bolton) therefore concluded that the two types of polyneuropathies most probably are separate entities.

Guillain and colleagues enumerated the clinical and spinal fluid features of polyneu-ropathy, and physiological abnormalities consistent with demyelination have been taken as supportive evidence for the diagnosis of Guillain-Barré syndrome. Feasby et al (with Bolton) also paid particular attention to patients who were clinically considered as having Guillain-Barré syndrome, but who were characterised electrophysiologically as having early axonal degeneration of the motor and sensory nerve fibres. The evidence included a rapid fall in compound muscle action potentials and sensory nerve action potentials, and no evidence of demyelination. Such patients often had severe paralysis and made a slow recovery presumably reflecting the need to regenerate axons rather than remyelination. Pathological findings are consistent with axonal degeneration without demyelination. Feasby et al termed this pattern axonal Guillain-Barré syndrome and suggested that there is a fundamental difference in the underlying pathophysiology, resulting in primary axonal damage rather than demyelination. Griffin et al confirmed the existence of the acute motor-sensory axonal neuropathy (AMSAN) pattern of Guillain-Barré syndrome described by Feasby et al.

Infection caused by the gram negative bacterium *Campylobacter jejuni*, a leading cause
of acute diarrhea, commonly precedes the development of Guillain-Barré syndrome. There is a close association between axonal Guillain-Barré syndrome and antecedent C jejuni infection. The antecedent infectious symptom was diarrhea in three of five post-infectious axonal Guillain-Barré syndrome described by Feasby et al. Observations by Griffin et al confirmed that AMSAN follows C jejuni infection. Serum samples from patients with axonal Guillain-Barré syndrome subsequent to C jejuni enteritis often have a high class autoantibodies to gangliosides GM1, GM1b, GD1a, or GalNAc-GD1a in the acute phase of the illness, and there is molecular mimicry between these gangliosides and the lipopolysaccharides of C jejuni isolates from patients with Guillain-Barré syndrome. This ganglioside mimicry may trigger high production of the IgG anti-ganglioside antibodies and these autoantibodies may cause motor nerve dysfunction in patients with GBS.

Interestingly, Hagensee et al reported a case of “C jejuni bacteremia and subsequent Guillain-Barré syndrome” that occurred in a patient with chronic grafted versus host disease and underwent allogenic BMT. Because there was acute flaccid paralysis associated with sepsis, some physicians might have diagnosed critical illness polyneuropathy. Conversely, the existence of this case strongly suggests that some diagnosis of critical illness polyneuropathy should actually be axonal Guillain-Barré syndrome or AMSAN. Our hypothesis of the nosological relation between critical illness polyneuropathy and Guillain-Barré syndrome is shown in the figure. Serum IgG antibodies against GM1, GM1b, GD1a, or GalNac-GD1a could be used as immunological markers for axonal Guillain-Barré syndrome. To examine the aetiology of critical illness polyneuropathy and its nosological relation to axonal Guillain-Barré syndrome, it is necessary to investigate whether patients with critical illness polyneuropathy have anti-ganglioside antibodies during the acute phase of the illness.

Nobuhiro Yuki
Koichi Hirata
Department of Neurology,
Dokkyo University School of Medicine, Japan
Correspondence to: Dr Nobuhiro Yuki, Department of Neurology, Dokkyo University School of Medicine, Kitakobayashi 880, Mibu, Shimotsuga, Tochigi 321–0293, Japan.


Repeatitive transcranial magnetic stimulation in the treatment of chronic negative schizophrenia: a pilot study

Recently, a new technology known as repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (RTMS) has been developed. In 1994, the use of magnetic stimulation in chronic psychiatric was suggested. Since then, it has been used in the study or treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder, conversion disorder, schizophrenia, and particularly, depression.

Our pilot study aimed to assess the possible adverse effects of this treatment in chronic schizophrenic patients with severe negative symptoms; to evaluate if direct RTMS of the prefrontal cortex might improve negative symptoms or cognitive impairments in patients with chronic schizophrenia; and finally, to note if RTMS might modify the deficit in prefrontal cortical activity, often referred to as hypofrontality, which is established in schizophrenia, specially under conditions of task activation.

Six right handed patients with chronic schizophrenia were identified at the outpatient psychiatric clinic of the Hospital Clinic of Barcelona. There were two men and four women (mean age 39).

Exclusion criteria included alcohol or substance abuse dependence disorder in the past 5 years, focal neurological signs, systemic neurological illness, taking cerebral metabolic activator or vasodilator medications, electroconvulsive therapy within 6 months, and significant abnormal findings on laboratory examination.

All patients were taking neuroleptic drugs, but a stable dose for at least 3 months was required. All patients were studied off benzo-diazepines for at least 1 week before beginning the treatment. During the RTMS, psychotropic medications were continued at the initial dosage.

All patients were admitted to hospital. Inpatients underwent the UK scale side effect score, the positive and negative symptom scale (PANSS), and a neuropsychological battery, the day before beginning the treatment and at the end of the treatment. The UKU scale was also administered after each session.

An equivalent neuropsychological battery was used on both occasions, which consisted of the block design test of the Wechsler Intelligence scale, the Wisconsin card sorting test (WCST), which were performed on each patient (24 hours before the beginning of the treatment and 24 hours after the last session).

RTMS was given with a Mag Pro magnetic stimulator, 5 days a week, during 2 weeks, at a dosage of 20 Hz for 2 seconds, once per minute for 20 minutes at 80% motor threshold. The motor threshold was determined by visualisation of finger movement. A butterfly magnetic coil was placed tangential to the orbital area, on the C4 and C3 EEG point.

An important finding of this study was that RTMS may be given to stable schizophrenic patients without exacerbating their psycho-

### Table: Neuropsychological tests and PANSS scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trail making test A</td>
<td>38.4 (6.4)</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>42.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail making test B</td>
<td>38.3 (4.5)</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate visual reproduction</td>
<td>50.5 (4.82)</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>54.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delayed visual reproduction</td>
<td>46.9 (8.23)</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inmediate verbal paired associates</td>
<td>54 (7.46)</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>59.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delayed verbal paired associates</td>
<td>8.8 (1.1)</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANSS-P</td>
<td>37.67 (11.15)</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANSS-N</td>
<td>36.5 (11.47)</td>
<td>p&lt;0.02</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANSS-P</td>
<td>31.67 (8.20)</td>
<td>p&lt;0.02</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANSS-P</td>
<td>27.83 (8.47)</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANSS-P</td>
<td>16.83 (7.28)</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANSS-P</td>
<td>15.33 (7.55)</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Block design          | Pre 49 (11.95)   | NS    |         |
2 Trail making test A  | Post 50 (8.69)   | NS    |         |
3 Trail making test B  | Pre 38.4 (6.4)   | NS    |         |
4 Immediate visual reproduction | Post 42.6 (14.1)|         |         |
5 Delayed visual reproduction | Pre 38.3 (4.5) | NS    |         |
6 Inmediate verbal paired associates | Post 41.0 (10.03)| NS    |         |
7 Delayed verbal paired associates | Post 50.5 (4.82)| NS    |         |
8 PANSS-P | Pre 54 (7.46)    | NS    |         |
9 PANSS-N | Post 59.5 (10.03)| NS    |         |
10 PANSS-P | Pre 8.8 (1.17)   | NS    |         |
11 PANSS-P | Post 37.67 (11.15)| NS    |         |
12 PANSS-P | Post 36.5 (11.47)| p<0.02| NS     |
13 PANSS-P | Post 31.67 (8.20)| p<0.02| NS     |
14 PANSS-P | Post 27.83 (8.47)| NS    | NS     |
15 PANSS-P | Post 16.83 (7.28)| NS    | NS     |
16 PANSS-P | Post 15.33 (7.55)| NS    | NS     |

Pre=preatreatment; Post=post-treatment; PANSS= positive and negative syndrome scale; PG=positive psychopathology scale; NG=negative scale; P=positive scale.

All patients tolerated the RTMS well, with minimal side effects (mild headache and tinnitus).

Cerebral SPECT of one patient was reported to be normal, showing no evidence of hypofrontality. The remainder of the patients showed hypofrontality on the initial neuroimaging. The results after RTMS indicated no change in the hypofrontality.

Negative symptoms showed a general decrease for all patients (table). Significance (p<0.02) was noted on the PANSS negative symptoms subscale. These patients reported to be more sociable than when originally seen. Nevertheless, clinical effects of the RTMS were subtle and difficult to distinguish from those derived from the supportive environment of the psychiatric ward.

With regard to the neuropsychological battery, we found a general improvement in all post-treatment scores (table), but only delayed visual memory achieved significance (p<0.05). This feature might be basically explained by improvement of attention, specifically of the maintenance of attention, which allows the correct function of the working memory. Thus, apart from the methodological limitations regarding the power of our conclusions, it is certain that there has been an improvement in the attentional capability.

We found that all patients (except one, who was always within the normal range) diminished their number of perseverative answers and errors on WCST (items characteristically altered in schizophrenia) after the RTMS. However, significance was not achieved on any WCST scores.

Two patients who initially did not perform any categories on WCST, after the treatment, achieved one category, a possible indication of improvement of their abstract thinking. This change leads us to consider a research strategy previously reported, in which the WCST is used as a screening test for selecting schizophrenic patients. Those initially achieving low category scores would be compared to higher category scorers in an effort to identify a subgroup most likely to benefit from RTMS.

Taking into account these mild improvements together, and the lack of changes in
Sensory alien hand syndrome

The case report by Ay et al of alien hand syndrome and review of the literature neglected the intriguing issue of why in every case so far reported the patient seems to be terrified of the alien limb. Not believing that you are any more in control of a limb is not likely to be a pleasant experience.

Those with alien hand syndrome seem to jump to extremely negative conclusions concerning the intent of the limb. Typically, as in the report of Ay et al, patients believe that the limb has deeply malevolent intentions towards the victim.

It is this aspect of alien hand syndrome that I suggest also incorporates into its neurological explanations, and which provides a clue as to why our everyday experience of being in charge of our bodies, and so initiating all personal action, itself has a neurological basis. In other words, while the brain is the seat of all our conscious experiences, there is also a part of our nervous system which is responsible for our belief that we have free will over our behaviour. Patients with alien hand syndrome think that they are no longer in control of a limb because the part of the brain that gives us the sensation of control over our bodies has been damaged.

When that happens, our limbs seem to act independently of us.

Research conducted in the 1980s has found that the same electrical brain wave changes that characteristically precede all limb movements, occur several 100 ms before we seem to consciously decide to move a limb. If our conscious decision to act is preceded by brain changes that anticipate action, then our “decision” to choose how to behave or “freedom”, as in free will, is in fact illusory. Our choices have in a sense been decided beforehand by our brains.

Spence’s evidence such as this, combined with phenomena such as alien hand syndrome, means that philosophers have to reconsider whether we have free will. He argues that these data suggest that our sense of agency is illusory and it follows that most of us share in common the useful delusion that we have free will. Patients with alien hand syndrome have lost this experience in relation to a particular limb. There is a sense then that those who experience the syndrome are closer to the reality of how much we are responsible for our actions than the rest of us.

This is because they lose the function of the part of the brain that normally works to make us think that we have conscious freedom of will. They develop the experience, therefore, of becoming mere remote spectators to the actions of their bodies.

Defenders of human “free will” argue what happens before the brain itself decides to act is still unknown, and there may be a role for our own autonomy there. But even these free will guardians concede the neurological research indicates that whatever happens before the brain is roused, must occur below our conscious awareness.

Yet in alien hand syndrome the patient thinks that the hand has hostile motivations; it is invariably the case that the patient not only thinks that the limb is “not self” but finds that the limb behaves towards the self in a destructive and aggressive manner. This could be explained by the assumption that if we lose our conscious sense of voluntary control over our bodies, our minds have to come up with an explanation for the location of action of our movements. We decide that if ourselves are not in control, then someone or something else must be; therefore, we no longer have a sense of the limb belonging to us.

Because to lose control over our bodies is one of the most terrifying experiences, our attempt to explain this finding occurs in the context of fear. It may be that our apprehension leads us to misinterpret innocent reflexive acts of our hands, such as scratching or rubbing, as malevolently inspired. Plus it could be that our interpretation of spurious possession in turn inspires the patient, “if I myself am not in control then someone or something else must be”. We would offer that the value of our particular case is that it was due to a central deafferentation—therefore the term “sensory alien hand syndrome”. As
opposed to the idea that “we know our limbs belong to us because they obey us,” we know that our limbs belong to us because they provide us with sensory input that is recognised as self. Many patients with movement disorders or paralysis lose control of their limbs but still have no difficulty in recognising them as self. Indeed even in “phantom limb” there is sense of self due to central processes in the absence of a limb. Our patient, as do others with anosognosia and primary abnormalities of central sensory systems, shows perhaps that it is central sensory processes that are the key to identifying “self”. We know our limbs not because they obey us but because of a pattern of sensory experience that accompanies our own limb movements. When this pattern never reaches specific cortical regions, then the limb is not perceived as self; called “amorphyosynthesis” by Denny-Brown and Banker. Selective stimulation by the centrally deafferented limb in “sensory” or “posterior” alien hand syndrome, or kinaesthetic stimuli due to movement of the limb as in the “anterior” or “frontal” alien hand syndrome, is perceived as due to another person or thing without critical questioning. This raises the most interesting question of what brain region is deafferented in the anterior alien hand syndrome whose processing is intact.

It is not our clinical experience nor the conclusions based on published reports that all patients suffering with alien hand syndrome are terminated by the effects of a lesion. In one author’s experience (BHP), two patients with alien hand syndrome and related intermanual conflict were irritated by but not terrified by their opposing limbs simultaneously. A young woman with the book “sensory experience of self” and her patient was amused but rather indifferent to his affected left side. The most terrifying situation we have heard is when the patient identified his affected left side as belonging to his mother-in-law! One patient reported by Heilman’s group with persistent alien hand syndrome referred to it as “my little sister”. Similar to our experience, they suggest that a pre-existing personality type may be necessary given that most patients with collosal disorganisation have difficulty in speaking.

Unlike our case of limited duration, the persistence of alien hand syndrome may depend on mesial frontal dysfunction. These patients rarely deny that the affected limb belongs to them. Instead, they understand it in terms of their “anarchic hand”. Hence, although the initial syndrome may result in disjointed and terrifying perceptions, it seems that the brain quickly re-establishes its control by presently unknown adaptive capacities. Furthermore, why it almost exclusively involves the left body side in right-handed people remains unknown. Studying this syndrome in greater detail may yield additional insights into the pathophysiology of denial and misidentification.

Vasomotor reactivity is exhausted in transient ischaemic attacks with limb shaking

The article of Baumgartner and Baumgartner entitled “Vasomotor reactivity is exhausted in transient ischaemic attacks with limb shaking” provides interesting new information regarding the treatment of transient ischaemic attacks. Involuntary limb movements contralateral to haemodynamic failure from severe carotid artery occlusive disease. The authors evoke an “exhausted cerebral vasoreactivity in the hemispheres opposite the involuntary limb movements”. In their report, involuntary movements affected only the limbs, and displayed no tonic contraction, tonic-clonic jerking, or Jacksonian march and no epileptic activity during attacks. These findings led the authors to strongly argue against seizures as the cause of limb shaking in these transient ischaemic events.

In contradiction, a 72 year old right handed man admitted to our hospital with a 3 month history of episodic weakness and numbness of the right arm. The patient then had six discrete stereotyped episodes of right arm weakness and clumsiness that were also characterised in speaking. Several episodes of dysarthria, numbness and weakness of the right arm and leg (MRC grade 4/5) were seen, unrelated to posture, some of which occurred when the patient was supine. Movements were characterised by slight tremulousness and asterixis-like movements of the outstretched right arm. There was a return to baseline functioning between events. Vagal triggering, however, showed low voltage spikes in the left central-parietal head regions contralateral to the facial twitching and the right arm and right leg weakness. Although ongoing clinical and EEG seizure activity stopped after 2 mg intravenous lorazepam, they reoccurred after loading with phenytoin. Because angiography disclosed a greater than 95% stenosis of the left internal carotid artery (while the patient was treated with phenytoin at a concentration of 16.5 mg/l), the patient was anticoagulated with heparin, but episodes continued. It was only after a left carotid endarterectomy that all episodes stopped, tremulousness, and EEG epileptiform activity stopped. They have not recurred over the past 5 years.

The literature includes several cases of focal motor inhibitory seizures causing weakness. Although it is impossible to prove a negative, it could be argued that although no epileptiform or other evidence of seizure activity is present in a particular case, the abolition of ongoing clinical and EEG evidence of inhibitory motor activity by intravenous diazepam argues in favour, at least in part, of an ictal contribution. The fact that in virtually all reported cases, abnormal movements are more definitively resolved by carotid endarterectomy, as may be the case for an underlying ischaemic aetiology that induces focal seizures. There are few reports that clearly delineate the interaction and association of inhibitory focal motor seizures and transient ischaemic attacks, as there are few sequential trials of antiseizure drugs or anticoagulation (under EEG monitoring) and finally carotid endarterectomy. Several authors support the concept of an inhibition of motor function in parietal and secondary somatosensory re-

PETER W KAPLAN
John Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, 4940 Eastern Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21224, USA


Baumgartner and Baumgartner reply: We are grateful for the response of Kaplan to our short report. We agree that somatic inhibitory seizures may mimic transient ischaemic attacks (TIAs). Such TIAs are associated with negative symptoms such as sensorimotor deficits and difficulty with speaking, EEG evidence of seizure activity, and cessation of the TIAs after the administration of an anticonvulsant drug.” Limb shaking TIAs, however, differ from TIAs related to inhibitory seizures in several ways. (1) They are associated with positive phenomena (limb shaking), and the involuntary movements do not affect the facial musculature. (2) Patients with attacks of shaking movements of the limbs have no EEG evidence of epileptiform activity, and involuntary movements do not stop after administration of anticonvulsant therapy. (3) Although the patient presented by Kaplan had a 95% stenosis of the left internal carotid artery, it is unclear whether haemodynamic failure was present or not, because no studies evaluating the haemodynamic reserve of the homologous hemisphere were presented. This is in accordance with the finding that the involuntary movements as well as the sensorimotor deficits of Kaplan’s patient were not related to paresis. (4) The patient’s symptoms could be due to disinhibition of subcortical control mechanisms as a result of ischaemia.

In our opinion, it is not clear whether the asterixis-like movements of the outstretched right arm of Kaplan’s patient are due to epileptic seizures, because unilateral asterixis of the outstretched arm has been reported with contralateral vascular lesions affecting almost all cerebral structures involved in somatosensory control including ischaemia in the territory of the middle cerebral artery.¹
BOOK REVIEWS


To the MRCP candidate neurology is one of the more daunting specialties. The unfamiliar nerve conduction study and the frankly mysterious EEG can distress an otherwise well rounded senior house officer. Despite the fact that much of neurology is commonly seen on a general medical ward—strokes, dementias and so forth—the general perception is of an unimaginable list of eponymous syndromes and obscure signs. Rather than dwell on the last, in this book Dr Smith tries to address the commoner complaints as examination style questions each with a “simple clinical les-
er”. The “grey box” section, for instance, includes questions on multiple sclerosis, cluster headache, and HSV encephalitis, while broadening the topics to include postinfective demyelination, chronic hemi-
crania, and acute haemorrhagic encephalomyelitis. There is, however, a tendency for the discussion after each question to be rather brief. A fuller explanation, with more allowance for the reader’s ignorance, would have been appreciated. The data interpretation section is somewhat better, covering CSF, EEG, and other data extremely well. Perhaps a little too well; would an MRCP candidate really be expected to recognise the character-
istic EEG of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease I surely hope not. Finally, the slide tests are disappoin-
ting. If anything, neurology lends itself best to this section of the written exam-
ination but it is let down by the poor quality of some of the images in this book. This is es-
pecially unfortunate, as other images in the same section are remarkably impressive. The Sturge-Weber skull radiograph and central pontine myelinolysis MRI are beautiful. In summary, this is a creditable first edition. I look forward to the second.

STEFAN MARGINIAK


This book, after a short introduction to some of the fundamental features of the disease goes on to provide some 117 illustrations of aspects of the disease from Cruevlier’s plates to histopathological specimens and also a heavy leaning to imaging particularly magnetic resonance scanning, as might be expected. There is no doubt the aesthetic impact of this short book. In addition, the fact that these illustrations emanate from a well established figure in the multiple sclerosis world and are likely to be a representative set of personal teaching slides from a successful academic career all vouch for the provenance and informative nature of the atlas. However the place of such a book within a neurologist’s library has to be questioned. There are a plethora of high quality textbooks devoted to all aspects of multiple sclerosis all well illus-
trated and most in colour. They provide in depth analysis of all aspects of the disease and although their illustrations tend to be smaller this is where I would choose to part with my money. It may be that the circulation of this book will be higher than expected as it is likely to be a popular choice for some pharmaceutical companies.

NEIL ROBERTSON


This monograph is the latest to be produced by the American Association of Neurological Surgeons as part of its Neurosurgical Topics series. It begins by tracing the history of cal-
varial reconstruction from ancient times. There follows a discussion of the different autologous donor sites and synthetic materi-
als currently available for repair of calvarial and facial defects. The merits, disadvantages, and contraindications of each are considered. Dural substitutes are then dealt with in simi-
lar fashion. Specific problems, such as scalp reconstruction, are dealt with in the context of commo-
nitted frontal sinus fractures, and reconstruction of the anterior skull base are the subject of separate chapters. The final part of the book is devoted to craniomistosis. A review of current knowledge on pathogenesis is followed by a good account of some of the more common techniques used to treat single suture synostosis. Understandably, a book of this type there is space only for an overview of the treatment and complications of multi-
suture involvement, but the chapter provides well chosen references for further reading. The reconstruction of traumatic and post-
surgical calvarial defects occupies the bulk of this volume, and is dealt with very effectively. Operative techniques and the relative merits of various materials are covered in a clear and concise manner. By contrast, the section on aural substitutes is a little disappointing because it does not provide the reader with reasoned argument on how to select the most approappropriate graft from the sometimes bewild-
ering variety of autologous, synthetic, and xenon graft materials which are available when vascularised pericranial tissue is not an option.

Craniomistosis is a topic which is covered very well in standard paediatric neuro-
surgical texts and it is not worth buying this book for that section alone. However, the account of techniques for repair of calvarial defects is excellent and merits the inclusion of this text in a departmental library.

ROBERT MACFARLANE


Transcranial colour duplex sonography is an ultrasonic technique which is becoming increasingly available for the non-invasive imaging of intracranial structures, particularly the basal cerebral arteries. There are now four principal components to the technique: B mode ultrasound which can be used to image the brain parenchyma; colour coded Doppler which provides a colour image of the basal vessels; spectral analysis of pulsed wave Doppler which is used to derive blood flow velocities; and latterly “power” Doppler which is also used to display flow using a red square. The ability to track the waveform further following analysis of the amplitude rather than the frequency of the reflected ultrasound beam. In addition, echocounter agents are now available which can increase the signal to noise ratio and thus help overcome the detrimental acoustic effects of the skull.

This volume of 400 pages and liberal colour diagrams and prints is edited by three exponents of the technique. Thirty one chapters contain an array of topics from the history of transcranial ultra-
sound, through the physics of Doppler ultra-
sound to potential clinical applications. The book is helpfully split into two sections with the theoretical aspects described in the first half and clinical aspects in the second.

This is certainly a specialised book and will really only appeal to those interested in, or wishing to develop, expertise in transcranial colour coded ultrasound. The book is particularly strong in the technical chapters on instrumentation, signal processing, echocounter agents, harmonc imaging etc will certainly provide a complete understanding of the principles behind the technique. I think that some of the errors made in the interpretation of vascular ultrasound examinations are due to an incomplete understanding of the physics of Doppler ultrasound, hence attention paid to this area is commendable.

The clinical section covers the examination technique, normal reference values, the main categories of cerebrovascular disease, and also contains chapters on topics which may be less immediately suitable for ultrasound study. For example, the findings in head trauma, tumours, psychiatric disorders, and movement disorders are the subject of separate chapters. Although I have no prob-
lem with enthusiasm for this technique a little pragmatism would not go amiss. A more bal-
anced discussion of the limitations as well as potentialities of the technique could have been applied.

As with any book with multiple authors there is some variation in style and overlap, particularly in the introductions and conclu-
sions of the chapters. Nevertheless, it is a comprehensive current review of transcranial colour coded sonography. Although the reader must decide exactly how this tech-
nique fits into clinical practice the book will certainly stimulate some ideas.

PETER MARTIN


This is volume 47 of a series entitled Neurological Disease and Therapy, series editor W C Koller. This volume is edited by an American surgeon and two British neuro-
physiologists. Most of the 45 contributors are American or British, almost half of whom, including Dr Cole, are from Southampton. The book begins with a pathophysiological
introduction setting the scene for the five main disease sections covering developmental/genetic disease, spinal injury, infection, tumour, and the effect of neurological and systemic disease on the spinal cord. This chapter covers a wide area from multiple sclerosis to motor neuron disease to vascular disease to metabolic diseases. Then follows a section on investigation considering imaging, neurophysiology, and urodynamics. Finally, there is a miscellaneous section covering clinically important entities such as pain, sexual problems, and terminal care associated with spinal cord disease but also including a highly specialised chapter on the role of omental transfer in spinal cord injury. This is an ambitious attempt at being comprehensive. The editors themselves worry that the emphasis favours surgical conditions. Although this might be the case, many surgeons approach the neuro-rheumatologist, care for spinal disease often falling between several specialties. Therefore, it is of benefit to the clinician to have all aspects of spinal disease in one volume. The standard and style of the individual chapters varies, that on motor neuron disease being up to date and topical, malignancies being covered in depth. That on sexual problems associated with spinal cord disease is excellent for the particularly practical and a must for both doctors dealing with spinal disease and for patients themselves who are often uninformed (our fault, not theirs). The chapter on depression illness will be food for thought for many doctors who enjoy recreational diving, for although studies have not yet shown adverse affects on the quality of life in those who dive frequently but without incident, the evidence for cumulative neurological damage from neurophysiological, imaging, and pathological studies is compelling.

The quality of illustration is high. Perhaps not surprisingly, this is particularly evident in the imaging section (where there is a rather spectacular sagittal T2 weighted MRI of a intramedullary arteriovenous malformation). In addition to imaging many of the chapters also make good use of schematic diagrams and line drawings to enhance the text.

Drs Engler, Cole, and Merton end their preface by commenting that “Our main hope, however, is that the chapters will read as a series of views on the spinal cord and its disease, so that a surgeon may learn about current practice as well as the wide range of conditions affecting the cord that are outside the field of surgery”. While I agree that educating surgeons is an admirable aim, I think that the authors rather undersell themselves and that this book’s main strength, as I have said above, is that it will appeal to all disciplines that deal with spinal cord disease, bringing together neurological, rheumatological, and surgical disease that is often covered in separate textbooks.

GILLIAN HALL


This is the second time that I have been asked to review a book on this topic. The first time I approached the task with some scepticisms. Were neurologist diseases in women really so different from those in men that they warranted their own text book? But I rapidly became a convert to the cause, being reminded that there are issues specific to females that influence both disease, investigation, and treatment (pregnancy, breast feeding, menopause, to name the most obvious) and that not all neurological diseases affect the sexes equally. There are also wider socio-economic and legal issues that play a part in the complete disease picture which many of us neglect too often but which this book is careful to address (see below). Leaving aside causality, this is a beautifully presented book; clearly headed and with wide use of well constructed tables. It encourages one to read on. It seems up to date and well referenced.

The contributors (40 in total) are exclusively American, and east coast American at that with only occasional forays westward. The text is divided into three sections. The first, entitled General Disease in Women includes an anatomical chapter considering the sex differences of regional brain structure and function. More novel for this type of text, it contains two thoughtful chapters considering women’s health within the context of their lifestyles and women’s health and its relation with the law. This chapter considers issues such as coercive approaches to preventing foetal harm, those relating to informed consent to medical treatment, and difficult choices with neurological implications. The law and the case examples are exclusively American but the issues are universal. This opening section leaves no doubt that this is a book that has taken female issues extremely seriously.

The second section looks at neurological diseases as they affect females at different life stages, from birth through menarche, pregnancy, and menopause, to the elderly woman. As well as considering genetic diseases that strike at a particular age, these chapters consider the influence of changing physiology and hormonal balance on neurological disease. The third section is the most conventional. Each chapter considers a neurological disease representing these diseases with emphasis on their effect on women and there is, by necessity, some overlap between this and the previous section. As a non-American, I would feel more comfortable to believe that the high number of female patients with peripheral nerve injuries secondary to physical beatings, knife wounds, or gunshot wounds reflected the country of origin of this book!

If pushed to criticise, the indexing could be more complete and certain conditions considered in more detail, in particular, paraneoplastic conditions associated with breast and gynaecological malignancies. However, that aside, I think this a rather special book and not only a good addition to any neurological library but a useful purchase for anyone interested in female medical issues.

GILLIAN HALL

**The reader may be interested in the following:**


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**CORRECTION**


During the editorial process the descriptions of the histograms in figure 4 (p 614) were wrongly ascribed. The corrected figure is reproduced below.

*Figure 4* Correlation of clinical response with grade of botulinum toxin injection: no response or good response according to BOTOX A grade 3 or 4 are responders. The corrected figure is reproduced below.
Acute overdosage and intoxication with carbidopa/levodopa can be detected in the subacute stage by measurement of 3-<i>o</i>-methyldopa

H J STUERENBURG and B G H SCHOSER

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