Paroxysmal Choreoathetosis Disease

Paroxysmal choreoathetosis is a movement disorder. With it, there are episodes or attacks of involuntary movements of the limbs, trunk, and facial muscles. The disorder may occur in several members of a family. Or it may happen in only a single family member. Prior to an attack, some people have tightening of muscles or other physical symptoms. Involuntary movements cause some attacks. Other attacks happen when the individual has consumed alcohol or caffeine, or is tired or stressed. Attacks can last from 10 seconds to over an hour. Some individuals have lingering muscle tightness after an attack. This disorder often starts in early adolescence. A gene linked to the disorder has been discovered. The same gene is also linked to epilepsy.

TREATMENT

Drug therapy has been successful in reducing or eliminating attacks. Carbamazepine is an effective drug but it is not effective in every case. Other drugs have been substituted with good effect.

In general, this disorder lessens with age. Many adults have a complete remission. Drug therapy is effective so the prognosis for the disorder is good.

RESEARCH BEING DONE

NINDS supports and conducts research on movement disorders. This includes paroxysmal choreoathetosis. Much of this research is aimed at finding ways to prevent and treat these disorders.

Research is continually being done to learn more about this problem.

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