Hallervorden-Spatz Disease

This disease is also called Neurodegeneration with Brain Iron Accumulation. It is a neurological movement disorder. It is inherited and rare. It causes a progressive degeneration of the nervous system.

SYMPTOMS

Problems vary among patients. They usually develop during childhood. They may include:

- Slow, distorting muscle contractions of the:
  - Limbs.
  - Face.
  - Trunk.
- Involuntary, jerky muscle movements. This is called *choreoathetosis*.
- Uncontrolled tightness of the muscles. This is *muscle rigidity*.
- Involuntary muscle spasms. This is called *spasticity*.
- Inability to coordinate movements. This is *ataxia*.
- Confusion.
- Disorientation.
- Convulsions. These are *seizures*.
- Stupor.
- Dementia.

Other symptoms are less common. They may include:

- Painful muscle spasms.
- Difficulty speaking. This is *dysphasia*.
- Mental retardation.
- Facial grimacing.
- Poorly articulated speech. This is *dysarthria*.
- Visual impairment.

TREATMENT

There is no cure for this disease. Nor is there a standard course of treatment. Treatment is:

- Symptomatic.
- Supportive.

It may include:

- Physical therapy.
- Occupational therapy.
- Exercise physiology.
- Speech pathology.

The likely outcome (prognosis) for patients with this disease is poor. The disorder is progressive. Death usually happens about 10 years after onset. In a few cases, patients may survive for several decades.

RESEARCH BEING DONE

The NINDS supports research on neurodegenerative movement disorders. This includes Hallervorden-Spatz disease. The goals of this research are:

- To increase understanding of these disorders.
- To find ways to prevent, treat, and cure them.

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

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