Binswanger's Disease

Binswanger's disease is sometimes referred to as subcortical dementia. It is a rare form of dementia. It is characterized by:

- Cerebrovascular sores (*lesions*) in the deep white-matter of the brain.
- Small blood vessels of the brain being shut off.
- Loss of memory and cognition.
- Mood changes.

SYMPTOMS

Patients usually show signs of:

- Abnormal blood pressure.
- Stroke.
- Blood abnormalities.
- Disease of the large blood vessels in the neck.
- Disease of the heart valves.

Other prominent features of the disease include:

- Urinary incontinence.
- Difficulty walking.
- Clumsiness.
- Slowness of conduct.
- Lack of facial expression.
- Speech difficulty.

These problems tend to begin after the age of 60. But they are not always present in all patients. They may sometimes appear only as a passing phase.

TREATMENT

There is no specific course of treatment for this disease. Treatment is symptomatic.

- It often involves the use of medications to control:
  - High blood pressure.
  - Depression.
  - Heart arrhythmias.
  - Low blood pressure.

Binswanger's disease is a slowly progressive condition. There is no cure for it. The disorder is often marked by strokes and partial recovery.

RESEARCH BEING DONE

The NINDS conducts and supports a wide range of research on dementing disorders. Scientists are currently re-evaluating the definitions for certain dementias. These include Binswanger's disease/subcortical dementia. The goals of research are:

- To improve the ways of learning what is wrong of dementias.
- To find ways to treat and prevent them.

The National Institute on Aging and the National Institute of Mental Health also support research related to the dementias.

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

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