Hydromyelia

Hydromyelia is an abnormal widening of the central canal of the spinal cord. This creates a cavity in which cerebrospinal fluid may build up. This causes an abnormal pressure on the spinal cord. This condition is associated with a number of disorders that disrupt the normal flow of cerebrospinal fluid. They include:

- Chiari I and II.
- Dandy-Walker malformation.

CAUSES

This disorder is often associated with trauma. That is damage caused by an accident.

SYMPTOMS

Problems (*symptoms*) may not occur right away. They include:

- Weakness of the hands, arms, and legs.
- Sensory loss in the neck and arms.

Some individuals have severe pain in the neck and arms.

DIAGNOSIS

Diagnosis is made by:

- Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).
- Electromyography.

TREATMENT

Generally, caregivers recommend surgery for individuals with this disorder who have moderate or severe neurological deficits. Surgical treatment opens pathways to allow for the flow of cerebrospinal fluid.

Surgery may permanently or temporarily relieve symptoms. But it can also cause a number of severe complications. In some cases, spontaneous remission may occur.

RESEARCH BEING DONE

The NINDS supports research on abnormalities of the spinal cord. This includes hydromyelia. Its goals are to:

- Learn more about them.
- Find ways to prevent and eliminate them.

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

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