Fahr's Syndrome

Fahr's Syndrome is a rare, genetically dominant, inherited neurological disorder characterized by abnormal deposits of calcium in areas of the brain that control movement, including the basal ganglia and the cerebral cortex. Symptoms (problems) of the disorder may include deterioration of motor (movement) function, dementia, seizures (convulsions), headache, *dysarthria* (poorly articulated speech), *spasticity* (stiffness of the limbs) and spastic paralysis, eye impairments, and *athetosis* (involuntary, writhing movements). Fahr's Syndrome can also include symptoms characteristic of Parkinson's disease such as tremors, muscle rigidity, a mask-like facial appearance, shuffling gait, and a “pill-rolling” motion of the fingers. These symptoms generally occur later in the development of the disease. More common symptoms include dystonia (disordered muscle tone) and chorea (involuntary, rapid, jerky movements). Age of onset is typically in the 40s or 50s, although it can occur at any time in childhood or adolescence.

TREATMENT

There is no cure for Fahr's Syndrome, nor is there a standard course of treatment. Treatment addresses symptoms on an individual basis.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN

The prognosis (likely outcome) for any individual with Fahr's Syndrome is variable and hard to predict. There is no reliable correlation between age, extent of calcium deposits in the brain, and neurological deficit. Since the appearance of calcification is age-dependent, a CT scan could be negative in a gene carrier who is younger than the age of 55.

RESEARCH BEING DONE

The NINDS supports and conducts research on neurogenetic disorders such as Fahr's Syndrome. The goals of this research are to locate and understand the actions of the genes involved in this disorder. Finding these genes could lead to effective ways to treat and prevent Fahr's Syndrome.

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

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