Myopathy

Myopathy is a general term. It refers to any disease of muscles. The muscular dystrophies are examples.

CAUSES

Myopathies can be acquired or inherited. They can occur at birth or later in life. They may be caused by:

- Endocrine disorders.
- Metabolic disorders.
- Infection or inflammation of the muscle.
- Certain drugs.
- Mutations in genes.

SYMPTOMS

General symptoms include weakness of limbs. These are usually located close to the center of the body (*proximal*). Some individuals report that their myopathy happens during exercise. In some cases, the symptoms decrease as exercise increases. Depending upon the type, one muscle group may be more affected than another. In some cases, individuals have myopathy but report no symptoms. In the inherited myopathies, some family members may not be affected. But other family members may have a range of symptoms.

TREATMENT

Treatments for myopathy vary depending on the type. Supportive and symptomatic treatment may be the only treatment available or needed in some cases. Treatment for other forms may include drug therapy, such as immunosuppressives. Physical therapy, bracing, and surgery may be needed.

The prognosis varies. Some individuals have a normal life span and little or no disability. But for others the disorder may be:

- Progressive.
- Severely disabling.
- Life-threatening.
- Fatal.

RESEARCH BEING DONE

The NINDS supports and conducts an extensive research program on neuromuscular disorders such as the myopathies. Much of this research is aimed at:

- Increasing scientific understanding of these disorders.
- Finding ways to prevent, treat, and cure them.

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

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