Miller Fisher Syndrome

Miller Fisher syndrome is a rare, acute polyneuropathy. This is a type of degeneration of the peripheral nerves that spreads toward the center of the body. The disorder is a variant of Guillain-Barre syndrome.

CAUSES

The majority of individuals with Miller Fisher syndrome have a unique antibody that characterizes the disorder.

SYMPTOMS

Problems include:

- Abnormal muscle coordination (*ataxia*).
- Paralysis of the eye muscles (*ophthalmoplegia*).
- Absence of reflexes (*areflexia*).

Symptoms may be preceded by a viral illness. They include generalized:

- Muscle weakness.
- Respiratory failure.

They are similar to those found in Guillain-Barre syndrome.

TREATMENT

Treatment for this disorder is identical to treatment for Guillain-Barre syndrome:

- Intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIg).
  - Or a procedure in which antibodies are removed from the blood. It is called *plasmapheresis*.
- Supportive care.

The outcome for most individuals with this syndrome is good. In most cases, recovery begins within 2 to 4 weeks of the onset of symptoms. It may be almost complete within 6 months. Some individuals have residual deficits. Very rarely (in less than 3 percent of cases) relapses may occur.

RESEARCH BEING DONE

The NINDS supports research for neuropathies such as Miller Fisher syndrome. It is aimed at discovering new ways to diagnose, treat, and cure these syndromes.

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

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