Schizencephaly

Schizencephaly is an extremely rare disorder. It causes abnormal slits, or clefts, in the brain's cerebral hemispheres. Schizencephaly is a form of porencephaly. This is a condition in which there is a cyst or cavity in the cerebral hemispheres. Individuals with clefts in both hemispheres (*bilateral clefts*) are commonly:

- Developmentally delayed
- Have delayed speech and language skills.
- Have corticospinal dysfunction.

Patients with smaller, unilateral clefts (clefts in only one hemisphere):

- Are often paralyzed on one side of the body.
- May have normal intelligence.

Patients with schizencephaly may also have varying degrees of:

- Abnormally small head.
- Mental retardation.
- Hemiparesis partial paralysis.
- Complete paralysis.
- Reduced muscle tone.
- Most patients have seizures.
- Some may have hydrocephalus.

TREATMENT

Treatment generally consists of:

- Physical therapy.
- Treatment for seizures.

In cases that are complicated by hydrocephalus, a shunt is used. A shunt is a surgically implanted tube that diverts fluid from one pathway to another

WHAT WILL HAPPEN

The prognosis varies depending on:

- The size of the clefts.
- The degree of neurological problem.

RESEARCH BEING DONE

The acronym for The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke is NINDS. NINDS conducts and supports a wide range of studies that explore the complex workings of normal brain development. Their studies offer hope for new means to treat and prevent brain disorders.

Research is continually being done to learn more about this problem.
Provided by: The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

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