Pseudotumor Cerebri
(Benign Intracranial Hypertension)

WHAT IS PSEUDOTUMOR CEREBRI?
Pseudotumor cerebri literally means "false brain tumor." It is also called also called *benign* (not cancerous) intracranial hypertension. It acts like a tumor, but is not one. It is caused by increased pressure within the brain. It is most common in women between the ages of 20 and 50. Symptoms of pseudotumor cerebri include:

- Headache.
- Nausea.
- Vomiting.
- Pulsating intracranial noises.
- Transient visual changes.

These closely mimic symptoms of brain tumors. This is possibly because of the buildup of pressure within the brain.

TREATMENT
Treatment is generally symptomatic. This means that *symptoms* (things that are wrong) are treated. Pressure may be controlled by removing excess fluid with repeated spinal taps. Pressure may also be controlled by *shunting*. This is using a tube to drain fluid from around the brain to another area of the body. Steroids may be prescribed to reduce swelling of brain tissue. Drugs to reduce cerebrospinal fluid production or diuretic drugs may be used to reduce fluid buildup.

PROGNOSIS
Pseudotumor cerebri may last months to years. Symptoms may be better or worse. If visual loss occurs, it may be permanent regardless of treatment. In some cases, pseudotumor cerebri *recurs* (comes back).

WHAT RESEARCH IS BEING DONE?
The NINDS (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke) conducts and supports research on disorders of the brain and nervous system, including pseudotumor cerebri. This research primarily focuses on increasing scientific understanding of these disorders. The research also focuses on finding ways to prevent, treat, and cure these disorders.

ORGANIZATIONS TO CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION
Intracranial Hypertension Research Foundation
6517 Buena Vista Drive
Vancouver, WA 98661
info@ihrfoundation.org
http://www.IHRFoundation.org
Tel: 360-693-4473

National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD)
P.O. Box 1968
(55 Kenosia Avenue)
Danbury, CT 06813-1968
orphan@rarediseases.org
http://www.rarediseases.org
Tel: 203-744-0100 Voice Mail 800-999-NORD (6673)

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