Moyamoya Disease

Moyamoya disease is a rare, cerebrovascular disorder. It causes narrowing of major blood vessels leading into the brain. It also causes the formation of abnormal blood vessels called *moyamoya vessels*. It affects children, adolescents, and young adults. Females are more often affected than males. The name "moyamoya" is Japanese for "cloud of smoke." It was chosen to describe the appearance of the abnormal vessels seen in diagnostic tests.

CAUSES

The cause of the disease is unknown.

SYMPTOMS

- Children may have a stroke or recurrent transient ischemic attacks (TIA's). These often occur with:
  - Muscular weakness.
  - Paralysis affecting one side of the body.
  - Seizures.
- Adults most often have a stroke or a hemorrhage.
- Both children and adults may have:
  - Disturbed consciousness.
  - Speech problems.
  - Sensory and cognitive impairments.
  - Involuntary movements.
  - Vision problems.

DIAGNOSIS

Generally, cerebral angiography is used to diagnose this disease. This is a procedure that involves injecting dye into the cerebral arteries before taking an x-ray. It makes the arteries easier to see.

TREATMENT

There is no cure for this disease. Treatment is symptomatic and supportive. People with TIA's and stroke may be given certain medications by their caregivers. These may include aspirin, vasodilators, or anticoagulants to reduce the risk of future attacks.

RESEARCH BEING DONE

Within the NINDS research programs, this disease is addressed mostly through studies associated with TIA and stroke. NINDS is the leading supporter of research on stroke and TIA. It sponsors studies ranging from clinical trials to investigations of basic biological mechanisms.

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

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