

## COGNITIVE FUNCTION IN GIRLS WITH ADHD

Neuropsychological performance of 43 girls, aged 6 to 17 years, with ADHD and 36 controls without ADHD was assessed at the Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston. Girls with ADHD were significantly more impaired on tests of attention, intellectual performance, and achievement, and had higher rates of learning disability than controls. In contrast, impairments in performance on measures of executive function, learning, and memory were not significant. (Seidman LJ, Biederman J, Faraone SV, et al. A pilot study of neuropsychological function in girls with ADHD. J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry March 1997;36:366-373). (Reprints: Dr Biederman, Pediatric Psychopharmacology Unit (ACC 725), Massachusetts General Hospital, Fruit Street, Boston, MA 02114).

COMMENT. Neuropsychological deficits involving executive function are less remarkable in girls than in boys with ADHD, but impairments of intellectual function, attention, and arithmetic and reading are common to both sexes. Psychiatric comorbidity is not a factor in the occurrence of cognitive dysfunction in children with ADHD.

## DIABETES, HYPOGLYCEMIA, AND COGNITIVE DYSFUNCTION

The effects of diabetes and of episodes of severe hypoglycemia on cognitive function in 28 diabetic children were assessed at the Trondheim University Hospital, Norway. Early-onset diabetes, before age 5 years, complicated by episodes of severe hypoglycemia, was associated with mild impairments of psychomotor efficiency and attention. Diabetes *per se* and occasional episodes of severe hypoglycemia had no effect on cognitive function in children with late-onset diabetes, after age 5 years. (Bjorgaas M, Gimse R, Vik T, Sand T. Cognitive function in type 1 diabetic children with and without episodes of severe hypoglycemia. Acta Paediatr Feb 1997;86:148-153). (Respond: Dr M Bjorgaas, Trondheim University Hospital, N-7006 Trondheim, Norway).

COMMENT. Early onset childhood diabetes complicated by episodes of severe hypoglycemia may be associated with mild cognitive dysfunction. A possible link between severe hypoglycemia and cognitive impairment in young adult diabetics was considered doubtful in a University of Edinburgh report. (see Ped Neur Briefs Nov 1996;10:88). The diabetes *per se* may be a more important factor in causation of diabetes-related cognitive impairment in children.

**Thyroid and neurological development.** Thyroxine supplements (8 mcg/kg) in 200 infants born at less than 30 weeks' gestation failed to improve developmental outcome at 24 months, in a study at the University of Amsterdam and Emma Children's Hospital, Amsterdam, the Netherlands. (van Wassenaer AG, Kok JH, de Vijlder JJM et al. N Engl J Med Jan 2 1997;336:21-26).

## TRICYCLIC ANTIDEPRESSANTS AND SUDDEN DEATH

Two cases of sudden death in children treated with tricyclic antidepressants for psychiatric disorders are reported from the Children's Hospital, Seattle, WA. A boy, aged 9 years, died after 5 weeks treatment with desipramine, 100 mg hs, for depression; cardiac arrest was preceded by complaint of stomach pains followed by convulsive movements. A boy, aged 7 years, died after treatment with imipramine, 150 mg hs and thioridazine, 25 mg