In the present study, low ten minute Apgar scores were more often associated with congenital disorders than with birth asphyxia in CP cases. Fetal distress and low Apgar scores cannot be used to distinguish CP of asphyxial origin from CP due to congenital malformation. Birth asphyxia or hypoxia that is severe enough to damage the fetal brain usually causes death before or soon after birth. The present authors underscore the importance of making accurate measurements and observations on neonates to avoid misattributing nonasphyxial CP to birth asphyxia. Carefully recorded observations of kidney, heart, and lung function can help to determine cause, because birth asphyxia that is severe enough to damage the brain usually damages the kidneys, lungs, and often the heart.

The purpose of the Collaborative Perinatal Study of the NINCDS was to determine the causes and methods of prevention of cerebral palsy. This present analysis of the data collected from the study shows that no cause could be identified for the majority of cases of cerebral palsy in term infants. Has the Collaborative Study failed in its designed purpose? In an editorial comment, Bedrick AD of the University of Arizona, Tucson, states that "prematurity and low birth weight are strong risk factors for CP. Prevention of preterm delivery would be a tremendous stride in preventing CP." This same comment was voiced by some of the committee members, myself included, 34 years ago in the early planning stages of the Collaborative NINCDS Study, Bethesda, 1955. The proposal of a prospective study restricted to the causes and prevention of prematurity in relation to CP which might have provided early answers was overruled in favor of the more general and involved study of all pregnancies. Much time and energy have been expended in the analysis of the data collected by this extensive study only to conclude that we probably do not know what causes most cases of cerebral palsy .

INTRACRANIAL TUMORS

WEST SYNDROME AND CEREBRAL TUMORS

Two infants, six and seven months of age, with West syndrome associated with cerebral tumors are reported from the Department of Neurology, Pediatric Hospital, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Initial neurologic examinations were normal and the diagnosis of the tumors was by ultrasound and CT. One infant had a Grade III glioma in the right thalamus and the other had an anaplastic ependymoma and cyst in the right hemisphere. EEGs revealed generalized hypsarrhythmia in both cases. Infantile spasms responded to ACTH 5 IU/kg/day. One patient died at 18 months of age and the other was seizure free after complete surgical resection of the ependymoma. (Ruggieri V et al. Intracranial tumors and West syndrome. Pediatr Neurol Sept/Oct 1989; 5:327-9).

COMMENT. Other brain tumors associated with West syndrome have included choroid plexus papilloma, ganglioglioma, and optic nerve glioma. Infantile spasms and choroid plexus papilloma have also been described in Aicardi syndrome (see Ped Neurol Briefs October 1989; 3:74).

OPTIC NERVE GLIOMA

The clinical presentation, diagnosis, response to therapy, and visual outcome of 18 children with optic nerve glioma are reported from the Division of Neurology, Department of Pediatrics, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. Failing vision was the presenting symptom in 13 patients and 15 had an incorrect initial diagnosis which resulted in many years of treatment delay with consequent further visual impairment and reduced efficacy of treatment. In patients presenting with visual impairment, the time from presentation to diagnosis was 28 months whereas in five with increased intracranial pressure, the diagnosis was made within three months. Incorrect initial diagnoses included idiopathic nystagmus (3), congenital optic nerve atrophy (3), squint, diencephalic tumor, multiple sclerosis, and hysteria. Following radiotherapy, an improvement in vision was observed only in those children who presented with increased intracranial pressure and who were diagnosed early. Multiple cafe-au-lait spots were observed in five children. (Appleton RE, Jan JE. Delayed diagnosis of optic nerve glioma: A preventable cause of visual loss. Pediatr Neurol July/Aug 1989, 5: 226-8).

COMMENT. In young children presenting with nystagmus, squint, optic atrophy, or visual impairment, the possibility of optic nerve glioma should be considered. The diagnosis is especially likely if signs of neurofibromatosis are associated. Early diagnosis may prevent visual loss and may influence the efficacy of radiotherapy.

LEARNING AND BEHAVIOR DISORDERS

MUSIC AND ADOLESCENT BEHAVIOR

The role of music in the lives of adolescents and the use of music preferences as clues to the emotional and mental health of adolescents is reviewed from the Group on Science and Technology, American Medical Association, Chicago, IL. Between the 7th and 12th grades the average teenager listens to 10,500 hours of rock music. Unlike television viewing which is often subject to family discussion and parental control, music is largely uncensored. Music plays a large role in adolescent socialization, as an information source about sexuality and alternative lifestyles, and as an introduction to political topics via various concerts organized for political causes. It is an important symbol in the search for independence and autonomy. It may provide an outlet for personal troubles or conflicts with parents. Musical preferences may reflect different types of struggles that adolescents face as they make the transition to adulthood. Rock music has spawned many cultural