

prospective, randomized, study of aggressive versus conservative management is required.

INFECTIOUS DISORDERS

RELAPSING HERPES SIMPLEX ENCEPHALITIS WITH CHOREA

Herpes simplex encephalitis (HSE) followed a biphasic course with relapse in 3 children aged 11 years, 9 months, and 11 months reported from the Hospital for Sick Children, London and South Hampton General Hospital, England. All 3 presented with fever and seizures and relapse was accompanied by generalized or hemi-chorea in 2 patients. All patients received repeat courses of acyclovir, antibiotics and anticonvulsants. Dexamethasone was added in the older patient and the acyclovir course was followed by vidarabine in 2 patients. All patients had residual sequelae at discharge: 1 had a mild right facial weakness and persisting dysphasia, another was severely handicapped with persisting chorea and a third was visually inattentive and had a right hemiplegia and left hemichorea. The cause of the relapse was not definitely determined. A possible resistant organism might indicate a longer initial course of high dose acyclovir or alternatively, a post-infectious neuroallergic process might suggest the substitution of immunomodulatory treatment in place of further antiviral treatment (Pike MG et al, Herpes simplex encephalitis with relapse. Arch Dis Child Oct 1991; 66:1242-4).

COMMENT. Relapsing herpes simplex encephalitis is not uncommon in adults but is rare in children. Chorea in association with HSE relapse is of interest. The authors refer to 7 additional patients reported in the literature.

Autism is another unusual sequel to herpes simplex encephalitis described in a 31 year old adult at the University of Goteborg, Sweden. (Gillberg IC. Autistic syndrome with onset at age 31 years: Herpes encephalitis as a possible model for childhood autism. Dev Med Child Neurol Oct 1991; 33:920-924). Other cases in the literature have occurred in pre-adolescence. Autism is not necessarily a developmental disorder and temporal lobe damage caused by herpes encephalitis may explain some cases. The Kluver-Bucy syndrome, characterized by emotional instability, hypersexuality and hyperorality, has also been described as a complication of herpes encephalitis when both temporal lobes have been involved.

PROGNOSIS OF ENCEPHALITIS

A population based, controlled follow-up study of the general outcome of 73 children followed for 2 to 12 years after the acute phase of childhood encephalitis is reported from the University of Oulu, Finland. Varicella accounted for 23% of cases, mumps 11%, herpes simplex 8%, measles 5%, and the etiology was unknown for 44%. The mean age at onset was 5.9 years