Teaching NeuroImages:

Transient epileptic amnesia

G. Della Marca, MD,
PhD
S. Dittoni, MD
F. Pilato, MD
P. Profice, MD
A. Losurdo, MD
E. Testani, MD
S. Colicchio, MD
V. Gnani, MD
C. Colosimo, MD
V. Di Lazzaro, MD

A 71-year-old man presented recurrent transient episodes of anterograde and retrograde amnesia, since age 60 years, with a frequency of 10 per month. The attacks, preceded by vague abdominal discomfort, lasted from a few minutes to 2–3 hours. History was unremarkable except for a head trauma; he took no drugs. MRI showed a left meningoencephalocele, likely posttraumatic, in the middle cranial fossa (figure 1). EEG showed left temporal spikes (figure 2). Carbamazepine induced cessation of the seizures. Transient epileptic amnesia is a distinctive

syndrome, characterized by recurrent episode of amnesia, symptomatic of an epileptic seizure disorder of temporal lobe origin.^{1,2}

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Address correspondence and reprint requests to Dr. Giacomo Della Marca, Department of Neurosciences, Catholic University, Rome, Italy, Policlinico Universitario “A. Gemelli” L.go A. Gemelli, 8-00168 Rome, Italy
dellamarca@rm.unicatt.it

Figure 1 MRI

T2-weighted MRI scans in the sagittal (A), axial (B), and coronal (C) planes. A meningoencephalocele is visible in the middle cranial fossa with expansion ahead of the temporal ventricular horn (arrows). In the coronal scan (C) focal hippocampal atrophy is evident.

From the Departments of Neurosciences (G.D.M., S.D., F.P., P.P., A.L., E.T., S.C., V.G., V.D.) and Bioimaging and Radiological Sciences (C.C.), Catholic University, Rome, Italy.

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Figure 2 EEG recording during wake and sleep

Scalp and nasopharyngeal (NP) EEG recording in wake (left panel) and during sleep stage N2 (right panel). Sharp waves and spikes are evident in left temporal leads and, particularly, in the nasopharyngeal recording during wake. No symptom was reported during the recording. Calibrations and time scales are in the lower right corners.

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