In Focus

Spotlight on the July 19 Issue

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Proinflammatory cytokines, sickness behavior, and Alzheimer disease

The authors examined 300 subjects with mild to severe Alzheimer disease (AD) for inflammatory markers. Small increases in peripheral proinflammatory cytokines resulted in exaggerated behavioral changes in subjects with AD. The effects of mild infections and the potential beneficial effects of interventions that reduce peripheral inflammation may be underestimated.

See pp. 212, 219, and 227; Editorial, p. 206

Multipoint incremental motor unit number estimation as an outcome measure in ALS

The authors evaluated a modification of standard incremental motor unit number estimation (MUNE) in 50 normal subjects twice and 71 subjects with ALS repeatedly for up to 500 days. They found that the use of multipoint incremental MUNE may allow investigators to reduce the sample size and study duration for phase 2 ALS trials.

See p. 235; Editorial, p. 208

The predictive value of gray matter atrophy in clinically isolated syndromes

This study examined 105 patients presenting with clinically isolated syndrome and 42 normal controls. Selective gray matter atrophy was predictive in patients with clinically isolated syndrome who developed early MS. The inclusion of gray matter analysis in the MS diagnostic workup is worth further investigation.

See p. 257

From editorialists Declan T. Chard and Jeroen J.G. Geurts: "Predicting the development of, and disability due to, MS remains a complex issue: the search for a reliable crystal ball is far from over."

See p. 210

Probing consciousness with event-related potentials in the vegetative state

This study demonstrated the possibility of diagnosing consciousness in 2 noncommunicating patients on the basis of their brain activity recorded during an

auditory cognitive paradigm, even when no behavioral evidence of consciousness could be found. Such measures of brain activity may improve the assessment of consciousness and cognitive status in noncommunicating patients.

See p. 264

A randomized trial of 4-aminopyridine in EA2 and related familial episodic ataxias

Placebo or 4-aminopyridine (4AP) was administered for two 3-month periods separated by a 1-month-long washout period to 10 patients with episodic ataxia and nystagmus. This trial demonstrated that 4AP decreases attack frequency and improves quality of life.

See p. 269

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN NEUROLOGIC PRACTICE

International Report: Local response following the Great East Japan Earthquake 2011

The aim of our laboratory is to study the neuroscience of dementia and contribute to the welfare of elderly people. Our work in the northern area of Miyagi prefecture has always been our priority. However, we never expected to experience such an extreme challenge as that of the March 11 earthquake. The efforts of care managers of the Social Welfare Council enabled elderly refugees to be sheltered efficiently in facilities, to receive home help services, and to receive delivery of medications.

See p. e12

VIEWS & REVIEWS

Does vigorous exercise have a neuroprotective effect in Parkinson disease?

Multiple avenues of investigation suggest that aerobic exercise might provide a neuroprotective effect against Parkinson disease progression. Animal studies have documented enhanced neuroplasticity and neurotrophic factor expression with exercise. These findings have obvious practice implications.

See p. 288

NB: "Cervical arterial dissections due to segmental medolytic arteriopathy," see p. 295. To check out other Clinical/Scientific Notes, point your browser to www.neurology.org.

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