In Focus

Spotlight on the August 23 Issue

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Distinct profiles of brain and cognitive changes in the very old with Alzheimer disease

The authors compared hippocampal volume and cortical gray matter thickness in areas affected by Alzheimer disease (AD) in 105 patients with AD and 125 controls divided into young-old and very-old subgroups. Patterns of AD-related cognitive impairment and brain atrophy were less salient in the very-old than in the young-old.

See p. 713

From editorialist Rhoda Au: "The analysis by Stricker et al. provides further evidence that even in the oldest decades of life, unique developmental changes must translate into age-specific application and methods."

See p. 706

Effects of β -blocker selectivity on blood pressure variability and stroke: A systematic review

β -Blockers increased variability in systolic blood pressure and stroke risk compared with other antihypertensives. Nonselective β -blockers, such as propranolol, increased variability in systolic blood pressure and stroke risk more than β_1 -selective agents and should be avoided in patients at increased risk of stroke.

See p. 731; Editorial, p. 708

Stroke recurrence within the time window recommended for carotid endarterectomy

High-risk asymptomatic carotid stenosis: Ulceration on 3D ultrasound vs TCD microemboli

Ultrasonic plaque echolucency and emboli signals predict stroke in asymptomatic carotid stenosis

Marmane et al. evaluated the risk of very early stroke recurrence associated with carotid atheroma in 314 ischemic stroke patients. Identifying carotid atheroma detected patients at high risk of stroke recurrence, particularly within 14 days of symptom onset.

An epidemic of unwarranted carotid endarterectomy and stenting for asymptomatic carotid stenosis in the United States threatens patients and the economy. The authors compared microemboli on transcranial Doppler or carotid ulceration (3D ultrasound) to identify the patients suited for medical or interventional treatment. Ninety percent would be better off with intensive medical therapy than with either intervention.

In a prospective study of 435 patients with asymptomatic carotid stenosis, both ultrasonic plaque echolucency and emboli signals detected by transcranial Doppler independently predicted ipsilateral stroke. Combining both methods further improved identification of high-risk patients and may serve as a tool for selecting patients for prophylactic carotid revascularization.

See pp. 738, 744, and 751; Editorial, p. 710

Extended-release pramipexole in early Parkinson disease: A 33-week randomized controlled trial

Extended-release pramipexole in advanced Parkinson disease: A randomized controlled trial

The 33-week controlled parallel-group study tested the superiority of either formulation of pramipexole (immediate- and extended-release) over placebo. It provides the evidence to use a novel once-daily formulation of the dopamine agonist pramipexole as initial monotherapy in early Parkinson disease. In the second trial of extended- and immediate-release pramipexole vs placebo, 507 patients experiencing motor fluctuations while taking levodopa underwent flexible study drug titration, then maintenance at optimized dosages. Extended-release pramipexole improved UPDRS score and off-time compared with placebo.

See p. 759 & p. 767

Primary intramedullary spinal cord lymphoma

Primary intramedullary spinal cord lymphoma mimics other causes of myelopathy including MS, neuromyelitis optica, and infectious etiologies. This paper describes the clinical, radiologic, and pathologic features of 14 patients with primary intramedullary spinal cord lymphoma. Delay to diagnosis and appropriate treatment was common, morbidity was high, and long-term survival was disappointing.

See p. 784

NB: "NeuroImages: Necrotizing granulomatous meningoencephalitis due to Balamuthia in an immunocompetent child," see p. 801. To check out other NeuroImages, point your browser to <http://www.neurology.org>.

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