In Focus

Spotlight on the February 23 Issue

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Notable in *Neurology*

This issue features an article analyzing the clinical syndromes and inheritance patterns of multiplex families with epilepsy and another evaluating cognitive functions in patients with prolactin-secreting pituitary adenoma. Another featured article compares natalizumab and fingolimod on both clinical and MRI outcomes in patients with relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis.

ARTICLES

Cause of death and predictors of mortality in a community-based cohort of people with epilepsy

The authors examined a community-based cohort of 558 people with epilepsy of whom 34% died during almost 25 years of follow-up. They described the distribution of causes of death and how these relate to epilepsy etiology and comorbid conditions. Addressing these issues may help decrease the risk of premature mortality in epilepsy.

See p. 704

From editorialists Burneo & Jette: "Nonetheless, as premature mortality is high in low-resource countries, it is imperative that studies such as that by Keezer et al. be replicated in other regions of the world to guide future health care and policy and implement ways to reduce this tragic outcome across the world."

See p. 700

An investigation into the psychosocial effects of the postictal state

Postictal cognitive and behavioral impairment is debilitating for patients and requires further study. In a prospective cohort of 1,776 patients, postictal cognitive and behavioral impairment was identified as an independent risk factor for depression and socioeconomic deprivation. Particular attention should be devoted to psychiatric comorbidities and socioeconomic issues in these patients.

See p. 723

Higher brain *BDNF* gene expression is associated with slower cognitive decline in older adults

Potential brain mechanisms that modify late-life cognitive impairment are unclear. The authors measured rates of cognitive decline in 535 older adults and their neuropathology findings and brain-derived neurotrophic factor (*BDNF*) gene expression levels at autopsy. Higher brain *BDNF* gene expression was associated with slower cognitive decline and may provide cognitive reserve in old age.

See p. 735

From editorialists Beeri & Sonnen: "*BDNF* gene expression or its gene products might thus serve as a biomarker for cognitive reserve against Alzheimer disease progression. Further study is needed to confirm these findings, to better elucidate the relationship between *BDNF* and systematic markers of cognitive reserve, and to clarify its potential therapeutic utility."

See p. 702

Effect of endovascular reperfusion in relation to site of arterial occlusion

Recent stroke trials have shown benefit from endovascular therapy, but patients with distal branch occlusions have been underrepresented. This pooled analysis of prospective studies demonstrated that reperfusion was effective in patients with proximal occlusions compared to patients with distal branch occlusions. These results underscore the need for inclusion of this subgroup in future endovascular trials.

See p. 762

NB: "Recognizing and preventing epilepsy-related mortality: A call for action," p. 779. To check out other Views & Reviews, point your browser to Neurology.org. At the end of the issue, check out the Clinical/Scientific Note discussing cerebral perfusion in stroke-like migraine attacks after radiation therapy syndrome. This week also includes a Humanities story titled "Charades with Alzheimer disease."

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