

Teaching NeuroImage: Nitromethane-Induced Acute Reversible Encephalopathy

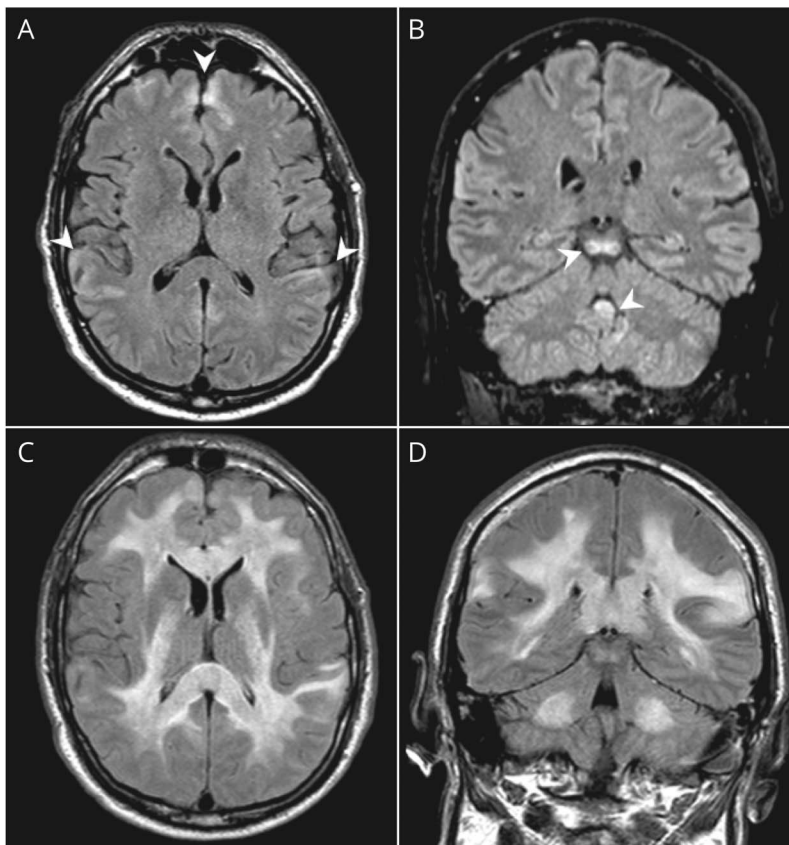
Giovanni Palumbo, MD, Michele Besana, MD, Sofia Ananiadou, MD, Carolina Giordano, MD, Gloria Maccabelli, MD, Mario Riccio, MD, Chiara Campana, MD, Alessia Giossi, MD, Enrico Piovan, MD, Davide Lonati, MD, and Lorenzo Pinelli, MD

Correspondence

Dr. Palumbo
gio17.palumbo@gmail.com

Neurology® 2021;97:e1361-e1362. doi:10.1212/WNL.00000000000012178

Figure 1 Brain MRI, Axial and Coronal Fluid-Attenuated Inversion Recovery Images



Brain MRI 2 days after admission (A, B) shows multifocal signal abnormalities in the gray matter of both cerebral hemispheres (arrowheads in A), quadrigeminal plate, and cerebellum (arrowheads in B). The follow-up brain MRI (C and D), performed during the 10th day of hospitalization, shows partial resolution of the gray matter lesions and development of extensive vasogenic brain edema.

A 60-year-old man presented to the emergency department reporting that he accidentally swallowed a sip (about 20 mL) of nitromethane he used as fuel for his racing bikes. Over the following 2 days, he became stuporous, experienced tonic-clonic seizures, and ultimately fell into a coma. Brain MRI showed multifocal gray matter T2/fluid-attenuated inversion recovery hyperintensities consistent with previously published findings of acute nitromethane encephalopathy¹ (Figure 1, A and B).

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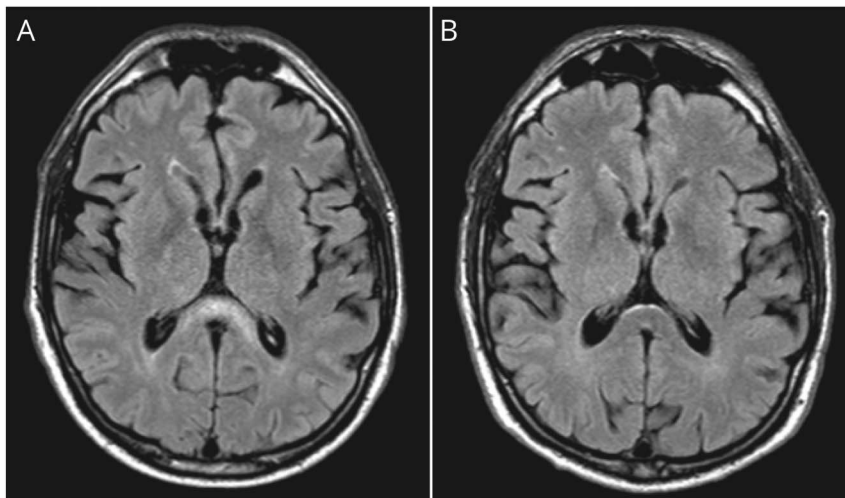
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From the Radiology Department (G.P.), Università degli Studi di Brescia; Diagnostic and Interventional Neuroradiology (M.B., G.M.), Intensive Care Unit (S.A., M.R.), and Neurology Unit (C.C., A.G.), ASST Cremona; Anesthesia and Intensive Care Unit (C.G.), Department of Emergency and Critical Care Department, ASST Papa Giovanni XXIII, Bergamo; Neuroradiology Unit (E.P.), ASST Mantova; Poison Control Centre and National Toxicology Information Centre, Toxicology Unit (D.L.), Istituti Clinici Scientifici Maugeri, IRCCS Maugeri Hospital and University of Pavia; and Neuroradiology Unit (L.P.), ASST Spedali Civili, Brescia, Italy.

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Figure 2 Brain MRI, Axial Fluid-Attenuated Inversion Recovery Images



MRI at discharge (A) shows reabsorption of the vasogenic edema, except for a faint residual hyperintensity of the splenium, and resolution of the gray matter lesions; 6 months later, a follow-up MRI (B) is normal.

After 1 week, the follow-up MRI showed massive vasogenic brain edema (Figure 1, C and D). Nonetheless, the patient's condition was improving with supportive therapy only. One month after his admission, he was back to baseline and he was discharged; 6 months later, brain MRI was normal (Figure 2).

Acknowledgment

The authors thank Dr. Anna Molinaro (Department of Clinical and Experimental Sciences, University of Brescia, Italy) and Prof. Nicola Latronico (Department of Anesthesia, Critical Care and Emergency, Spedali Civili University Hospital, University of Brescia, Italy) for their contributions.

Study Funding

The authors report no targeted funding.

Disclosure

The authors report no disclosures relevant to the manuscript. Go to Neurology.org/N for full disclosures.

Appendix Authors

Name	Location	Contribution
Giovanni Palumbo, MD	Radiology Department, Università degli Studi di Brescia, Italy	Drafting/revision of the manuscript for content, including medical writing for content, study concept or design, analysis or interpretation of data
Michele Besana, MD	Diagnostic and interventional Neuroradiology, ASST Cremona, Italy	Major role in the acquisition of data, study concept or design, analysis or interpretation of data
Sofia Ananiadou, MD	Intensive Care Unit, ASST Cremona, Italy	Major role in the acquisition of data

Appendix (continued)

Name	Location	Contribution
Carolina Giordano, MD	Intensive Care Unit, ASST Papa Giovanni XXIII, Bergamo, Italy	Major role in the acquisition of data
Gloria Maccabelli, MD	Diagnostic and Interventional Neuroradiology, ASST Cremona, Italy	Major role in the acquisition of data
Mario Riccio, MD	Intensive Care Unit, ASST Cremona, Italy	Major role in the acquisition of data
Chiara Campana, MD	Neurology Unit, ASST Cremona, Italy	Major role in the acquisition of data
Alessia Giossi, MD	Neurology Unit, ASST Cremona, Italy	Major role in the acquisition of data
Enrico Piovan, MD	Neuroradiology Unit, ASST Mantova, Italy	Major role in the acquisition of data
Davide Lonati, MD	Poison Control Centre and National Toxicology Information Centre, Toxicology Unit, Istituti Clinici Scientifici Maugeri, IRCCS Maugeri Hospital and University of Pavia, Italy	Major role in the acquisition of data, analysis or interpretation of data
Lorenzo Pinelli, MD	Neuroradiology Unit, ASST Spedali Civili, Brescia, Italy	Drafting/revision of the manuscript for content, including medical writing for content, major role in the acquisition of data, study concept or design, analysis or interpretation of data

Reference

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Neurology 2021;97:e1361-e1362 Published Online before print May 12, 2021

DOI 10.1212/WNL.00000000000012178

This information is current as of May 12, 2021

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