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Journal of Communication Disorders, Deaf Studies & Hearing Aids

Perspective

Etiology and Diagnosis of Ataxia

Jorge C. Kattah*

Department of Neurology, Coimbra University Hospital Centre, Coimbra, Portugal

DESCRIPTION

Ataxia is a neurological system degenerative illness. Many Ataxia symptoms, such as slurred speech, stumbling, falling, and incoordination, are similar to those of intoxication. These symptoms are caused by injury to the cerebellum, the portion of the brain responsible for movement coordination. Treatment for ataxia consists of a combination of medicine to alleviate symptoms and therapy to improve quality of life. Ataxia can be limited to one side of the body, is referred to as hemi ataxia. Several possible causes exist for these patterns of neurological dysfunction. Dystaxia is a mild degree of ataxia. Friedreich's ataxia has gait abnormality as the most commonly presented symptom.

Symptoms

- Fine motor skills deterioration
- Walking is difficult
- Anomalies in gait
- Abnormalities in eye movement
- Tremors
- Heart issues

Diagnosis

Genetic testing: Determines whether the mutation that causes one of the hereditary ataxic conditions is present. Tests are available for many but not all of the hereditary ataxias.

Lumbar puncture: spinal tap - A needle is inserted into the lower back (lumbar region) between two lumbar vertebrae to obtain a sample of cerebrospinal fluid for testing.

Ataxia is assessed using a mix of methods that may include a medical history, a family background, and a comprehensive neurological examination.

To rule out other illnesses, various blood tests may be conducted. Various kinds of hereditary ataxia can be diagnosed using genetic blood tests.

Common medications for ataxia symptoms

Common Ataxia symptoms are mentioned below, along with the off-label drugs that have been used to treat them. These drugs have been mentioned in medical journals or by Ataxia specialists.

Depression

SSRIs (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors) and SNRIs (Selective Norepinephrine-Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors) are two types of anxiety and depression medications.

Muscle cramps or spasms: Tizanidine, Baclofen (Zanaflex)

Neuropathy

Cymbalta, Lyrica, as well as Gabapentin, other anti-seizure medications, and various tricyclic antidepressants are commonly used.

Tremor or rest tremor: Carbamazepine, Clonazepam, Deep Brain Stimulation, Flunarizine, Gabapentin (Neurontin), Isoniazid, Levetiracetam, Levodopa (carbidopa-levodopa, Sinemet), NAC (N-acetylcysteine).

Ataxia causes

Spinocerebellar ataxia: One particular form of ataxia among a variety of genetic conditions affecting the central nervous system is known as spinocerebellar ataxia. The cerebellum degenerates as a result of genetic abnormalities that affect specific nerve fibers that transmit messages to and from the brain.

Correspondence to: Jorge C. Kattah, Department of Neurology, Coimbra University Hospital Centre, Coimbra, Portugal, E-mail: kattahC1@gmail.pt

Received: 09-Aug-2022, Manuscript No. JCDSHA-22-19453; **Editor assigned:** 12-Aug-2022, PreQC No. JCDSHA-22-19453 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 26-Aug-2022, QC No. JCDSHA-22-19453; **Revised:** 02-Sep-2022, Manuscript No. JCDSHA-22-19453 (R); **Published:** 09-Sep-2022, DOI: 10.35248/2375-4427.22.10.233.

Citation: Kattah JC (2022) Etiology and Diagnosis of Ataxia. J Commun Disord.10:233.

Ataxia telangiectasia: Ataxia The onset of telangiectasia in youngsters coincides with their first steps. Even though they often begin walking at a regular age, when they walk, standstill, or sit, they wobble or sway. They begin to exhibit ataxic symptoms and shortly afterward develop "telangiectasia," or small red "spider" veins, on the exposed skin of the ears and cheeks and in the corners of the eyes.

Mitochondrial ataxia: There are other ways to inherit ataxia as well. Through the defective mitochondria in the mother's eggs, mitochondrial ataxias are passed from mother to kid.

Sporadic ataxia: There is no proof that sporadic ataxia was inherited from a family member. It may be challenging to diagnose. Before a diagnosis of sporadic ataxia can be made, other kinds of ataxia must be ruled out.

While diagnosing sporadic ataxia, doctors frequently utilize a variety of words. Several of these include:

- Olivopontocerebellar Atrophy (OPCA)
- Olivopontocerebellar degeneration
- Idiopathic late onset cerebellar atrophy or degeneration (ILOCA or ILOCD)