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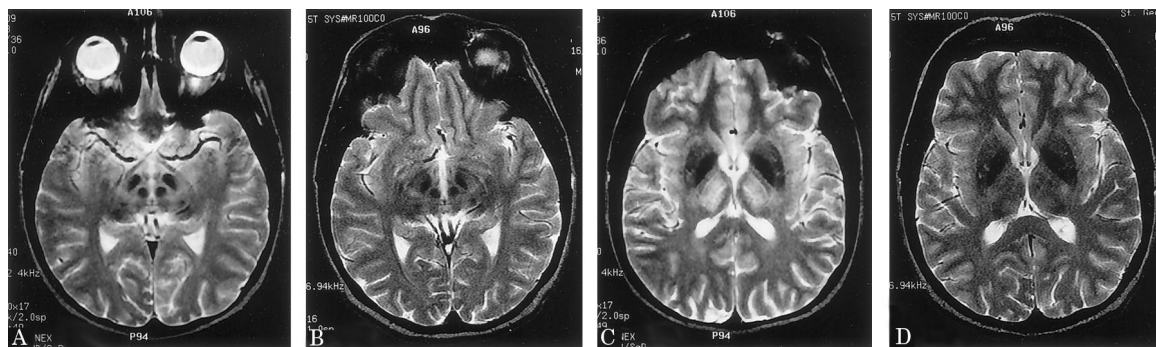


Figure. T2-weighted MR images. The initial scans at the level of the midbrain (A) and thalamus (C) are shown; (B) and (D) show corresponding images 1 year later.

Disappearing “face of the giant panda”

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A 28-year-old woman had been diagnosed with hepatic Wilson’s disease at age 11 years. After a period of noncompliance with treatment she presented with a 12-month history of progressive upper limb and head tremor. On examination, she had titubation, dysarthria, and a resting upper limb tremor with a significant postural and action component. An MRI scan of the brain showed changes characteristic of Wilson’s disease, including the “face of the giant panda” sign in the midbrain (figure, A)¹ and high-intensity lesions in both thalami (figure, C).² The patient improved, both clinically and radiologically (see figure, B and D), while taking an increased dose of D-penicillamine and pyridoxine. The T2 high-intensity lesions seen in the

brainstem and thalamus in Wilson’s disease are postulated to be secondary to edema or gliosis, and have been reported to disappear or attenuate following successful treatment of neurologic Wilson’s disease.² Accentuation of the normal low intensity of the red nuclei and substantia nigra by the surrounding abnormal high-intensity signal in the midbrain tegmentum results in the “face of the giant panda” sign, said to be characteristic of Wilson’s disease.¹ This particular midbrain abnormality has not previously been shown to disappear with successful treatment, as in the case reported here.

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Neurology 2001;56;665

DOI 10.1212/WNL.56.5.665

This information is current as of March 13, 2001

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