

Spinal magnetization transfer imaging in adrenomyeloneuropathy (AMN)

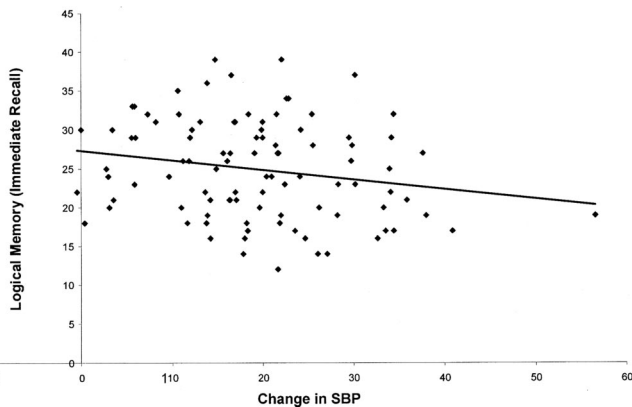
Fatemi et al. demonstrate that magnetization transfer (MT) imaging of spinal cord is a sensitive and early measure of disease in AMN. Signal changes in specific tracts correlated with clinical measures of the disease.

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The accompanying editorial by Barkhof and McKinstry notes that cerebral MT imaging is useful in multiple sclerosis, but spinal cord imaging is complicated by the small cord size, interference from surrounding structures, and contamination by CSF pulsation artifacts. Thus, the potential of MT imaging for evaluation of demyelinating cord lesions has remained unrealized. Still less is known about the degree of spinal cord involvement in adrenoleukodystrophy and AMN. The optimized MT technique used by Fatemi et al. employs a wider range of additional frequency pulses than commonly used in the brain, and improves image contrast in the cord. Images are normalized to the signal from CSF and are then added together. If their method is validated as a reproducible metric suitable for multicenter studies, clinical trials could use spinal cord lesion burden to assess treatment efficacy.

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Elevation of blood pressure in response to stress and cognition



Waldstein et al. studied the relationship between blood pressure (BP) responses to mental stress and cognitive functioning in 94 healthy older adults. They found that greater systolic and diastolic BP responses were associated with diminished performance on tests of immediate and delayed verbal memory, and executive function.

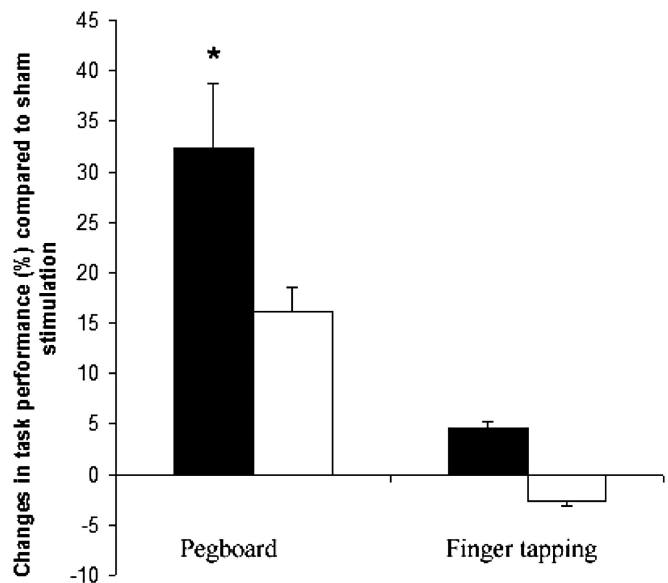
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Safety of diazepam rectal gel

Pellock and Shinnar reviewed respiratory events and deaths associated with use of diazepam rectal gel for seizures. With more than 2 million doses prescribed, they identified nine respiratory events and three deaths, all with prolonged seizures. They conclude that diazepam rectal gel is safe when used as recommended.

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Repetitive TMS improves motor function in stroke



In a sham stimulation controlled trial, Mansur et al. demonstrated that slow repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS) to the motor cortex of the undamaged hemisphere significantly improved motor function in patients within 12 months after a stroke.

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Pravastatin and cerebral infarcts and white matter lesions

Ten Dam et al. examined the effect of pravastatin treatment in 265 patients vs placebo in 270 patients for a period of 33 months. They found that pravastatin treatment did not prevent new cerebral infarcts or the progression of white matter lesions.

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■ Stress and seizure exacerbation after the 9/11 attack

Klein and van Passel found that 8 of 66 (12%) patients with epilepsy present in Washington, DC, during the

9/11/2001 attack experienced seizure exacerbation after the attack. This figure was higher (29%) among patients who felt stressed by the attack and higher still (50%) among patients directly affected by the attack.

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