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Histopathological changes of cerebral vessels secondary to drug abuse

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Drug abuse represents a significant health issue. Most commonly abused substances are heroin, cocaine, cannabis and amphetamine and addicts frequently abuse more than one substance. Since most of the drug substances injected by abusers contain contaminants in the form of particulate foreign matter and they are usually injected without sterile precautions, a broad spectrum of changes affecting the central nervous system is observed. The major findings result from the consequences of ischaemia and cerebrovascular diseases. We have conducted a post-mortem (autopsy) study on cerebral vessels of drug abusers. Histopathological changes observed include vascular lumen thrombosis, platelet aggregation, atherosclerosis, transmural and perivascular infiltration of small cerebral vessels by inflammatory cells, granulomas, dilatation of perivascular spaces with protein exudate and fibrinoid necrosis of the medium and intima. All these histopathological changes observed on cerebral vessels of drug abusers apparently hamper neuronal function and could explain the cognitive decline and psychosocial changes that are seen on drug addicts. This study was conducted with the support of IKY Fellowships of Excellence for postgraduate studies in Greece – Siemens Program.

Biography

Panagiotis Zogopoulos is a resident of Neurosurgery at the General Hospital of Nikaia-Piraeus "Agios Panteleimon", Athens, Greece. His ongoing research is in the field of drugs and their interaction with human brain and cerebral vessels. Several of his papers have been published in reputed peer-review journals and he has presented various researches in international conferences.

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