

An Overview on Multiple System Atrophy (MSA)

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Description

Multiple System Atrophy (MSA) is a rare neurological illness that affects your body's involuntary (autonomic) systems, such as blood pressure, respiration, bladder function and motor coordination.

MSA, also known as Shy-Drager syndrome, olivopontocerebellar atrophy or striatonigral degeneration, shares many of the same symptoms as Parkinson's disease, including delayed movement, tight muscles and poor balance. There is no cure and treatment consists of drugs and lifestyle adjustments to help control symptoms. The illness worsens over time, finally leading to death.

Symptoms

Multiple System Atrophy (MSA) affects multiple body systems. Symptoms commonly appear in maturity, around the age of 50 or 60. There are two forms of MSA: parkinsonian and cerebellar. The kind is determined by the symptoms present at the time of diagnosis.

Parkinsonian type

The most prevalent type of MSA is this one. Symptoms and indicators are comparable to those of Parkinson's disease, including:

- Muscle rigidity
- Bending your arms and legs is difficult
- Slowly moving (bradykinesia)
- Tremors (far less common in MSA than in conventional Parkinson's disease)
- Problems with balance and posture

Cerebellar type

Problems with muscular coordination (ataxia) are the most common indications and symptoms, but others may include:

- Unsteady walk and lack of balance are examples of impaired mobility and coordination
- Speech that is slurred, sluggish or low-volume (dysarthria)
- Blurry or double vision, as well as difficulties concentrating your eyes
- Dysphagia (difficulty swallowing or chewing)

Besides this the other symptoms are as follows:

Urinary and bowel problems

- Constipation
- Bladder or bowel control problems (incontinence)

Sweating irregularities

- Sweat, tears and saliva production are all reduced
- Reduced perspiration causes heat sensitivity
- Impaired body temperature regulation, resulting in cold hands and feet

Sleep disturbances

- Sleep disturbances caused by "acting out" nightmares
- Sleep breathing problems

Libido decline

- Cardiovascular complications.
- Cold hands and feet produce colour changes in the hands and feet due to blood pooling.

Psychiatric difficulties

- Controlling emotions, such as inappropriately laughing or sobbing.

Causes

Multiple System Atrophy (MSA) has no recognized etiology. Some experts are looking into whether the disease has an inherited component or if an environmental contaminant is involved, but there is no solid evidence to back up these claims. MSA causes the cerebellum, basal ganglia and brainstem, which control internal body functions, digestion and motor control, to deteriorate and decrease (atrophy). The damaged brain tissue of persons with MSA displays nerve cells (neurons) with an abnormal quantity of a protein called alpha-synuclein under a microscope. This protein may be overexpressed in multiple system atrophy, according to some research.

Complications

Multiple System Atrophy (MSA) has no recognized aetiology. Some experts are looking into whether the disease has an inherited component or if an environmental contaminant is involved, but there is no solid evidence to back up these claims. MSA causes the cerebellum, basal ganglia and brainstem, which control internal body functions, digestion and motor control, to deteriorate and decrease (atrophy). The damaged brain tissue of persons with MSA displays nerve cells (neurons) with an abnormal quantity of a protein called alpha-synuclein under a microscope. This protein may be overexpressed in multiple system atrophy, according to some research.

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