

slowly progressive. MmD is autosomal recessive and CCD is autosomal dominant in inheritance. The above study of families provides genetic evidence that MmD is a variant of CCD with autosomal recessive inheritance and transitory expression as MmD.

Congenital myasthenic syndrome (CMS) caused by a newly identified chromosomal microdeletion and N-box mutation of the AChRe gene is reported from Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich, Germany. (Abicht A, Stucka R, Schmidt C et al. *Brain* May 2002;125:1005-1013). CMSs are a heterogeneous group of disorders with impaired neuromuscular transmission due to various inherited defects. This is the first report of a chromosomal microdeletion affecting an AChR gene in skeletal muscle.

Therapies for disorders of the neuromuscular junction are reviewed in an editorial (Pruitt JN II, Swift TR. *Arch Neurol* May 2002;59:739-742). These are of 2 types: 1) symptomatic treatment with cholinesterase inhibitors and plasmapheresis; and 2) immunotherapy (immunosuppressant medications), immunomodulating therapy (immunoglobulin (Ig) G), and thymectomy. The most promising approach is the development of more specific and less toxic immunosuppression therapies.

ATTENTION DEFICIT AND COMORBID DISORDERS

ATTENTION DYSFUNCTION AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The influence of adolescent attention functioning on the development of substance abuse was studied in 66 high-risk youths over an 8-year period at the University of California San Diego Department of Psychiatry. Substance involvement was assessed by self-report, resource person reports, and randomly sampled toxicology screens at interviews at ages 15 through 23. Lower scores on neuropsychological tests of attention/executive functioning at intake assessment were prospectively (8 years later) associated with greater frequency of substance use and marijuana use in particular. Youths who met one or more substance dependence criteria as adults had significantly poorer attention performance in adolescence. Gender, education, conduct disorder, family history of substance use disorders, and learning disabilities did not influence the relationship between attention functioning and substance involvement. Clinical diagnoses of ADHD were not available in this patient population and study. (Tapert SF, Baratta MV, Abrantes AM, Brown SA. Attention dysfunction predicts substance involvement in community youths. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry* June 2002;41:680-686). (Respond: Dr Susan F Tapert, Psychology Service (116B), VA San Diego Healthcare System, 3350 La Jolla Village Drive, San Diego, CA 92161).

COMMENT. Adolescents with impaired attention functioning are at increased risk for development of alcohol and drug involvement.

INFANT CRYING AND RISK OF HYPERACTIVITY AND LEARNING DISORDERS

Infants with persistent crying (PC) in the first 6 months (mean age 3.8 months) were reassessed at 8 to 10 years of age and compared with 64 classroom controls for hyperactivity, conduct problems and academic difficulties in a prospective study at the University of Hertfordshire, UK. Ten (19%) of 53 PC infants had pervasive hyperactivity, as reported by child, parent and teacher, compared with 1 of 62 controls, at school age. Parents and children but not