

COMMENT. The lenticular nuclei may contribute to the mechanism of infantile spasms. A cortical-subcortical interaction is proposed in the pathophysiology of infantile spasms. A Commission on Pediatric Epilepsy of the International League Against Epilepsy, following a workshop on infantile spasms, has proposed that the term infantile spasms is too restrictive and the term "spasms" is preferable to designate a special type of epileptic seizure that involves the axial musculature-in flexion, extension or mixed- and that often occurs in clusters. They propose that this type of seizure should be listed in the International Classification of Epileptic Syndromes (Commission 1981) and not be confined to the International Classification of Epileptic Syndromes (Commission 1989).

VALPROATE METABOLITES DURING TREATMENT OF INFANTILE SPASMS

Metabolite profiles were measured in serum and urine of pediatric patients treated with valproic acid for infantile spasms at the Institute of Toxicology and Embryopharmacology, Free University Berlin and Department of Pediatrics, Rittberg-Krankenhaus, Berlin, Germany. The mean age was 7 months (range 4-12 months) and all 25 patients had the hypsarrhythmia pattern in the EEG. Eighteen patients were seizure free after 3 months of VPA monotherapy in a dose of 100 mg/kg body weight/day. The main VPA metabolites in serum were the β -oxidation products (2-en-VPA and 3-keto-VPA) and the major diunsaturated metabolite 2,3'-dien VPA; 4-en and 3-keto-4-en, 2 potential hepatotoxins, were detected only in very low concentrations. Glucuronide conjugates and the oxidation products represent the most abundant metabolites in urine. Two children had transient abnormal metabolite profiles indicating altered β -oxidation and associated with hepatomegaly and increased liver enzyme activity (Fisher E et al. Valproate metabolites in serum and urine during antiepileptic therapy in children with infantile spasms: abnormal metabolite pattern associated with reversible hepatotoxicity. *Epilepsia* Jan/Feb 1992; **33**:165-171). (Reprints: Professor Dr. H. Nau, Institute of Toxicology and Embryopharmacology, Free University Berlin, Garystrasse 5, D-1000 Berlin 33, Germany.)

COMMENT. The initial stages of hepatotoxicity reactions to VPA may be accompanied by characteristic changes in VPA metabolism (increased levels of 2-en, 2,3'-dien and 3-en VPA). The concentrations of unsaturated metabolites and enzyme activity became normal in 2 children on reduction of VPA dose and concomitant lowering of fever. These abnormal metabolite patterns occurred predominantly in patients treated with large doses of VPA combined with dexamethasone. The authors propose that the early detection of such abnormal metabolite patterns might decrease the risk of severe hepatic injury by the timely withdrawal of VPA or reduction of dosage.

MRI IN TUBEROUS SCLEROSIS WITH NORMAL I.Q.

The number, size and distribution of cerebral hamartomas determined by MRI in 11 patients with tuberous sclerosis and normal intellect are