

Thallium poisoning from maliciously contaminated food. Clin Toxicol Nov 1994;32:723-730). (Reprints: Dr William J Meggs, New York City Poison Control Center, 455 First Avenue, Room 123, New York, NY 10016).

COMMENT. Gastrointestinal symptoms followed closely by painful paresthesias of extremities are the early diagnostic manifestations of thallium poisoning. Alopecia is a late sign. The authors advocate early treatment with prussian blue. Thallium is radiopaque and radiographs of poisoned food may demonstrate metallic densities.

ATTENTION AND LEARNING DISORDERS

TREATMENT OF ADHD IN TOURETTE'S SYNDROME

A double-blind, placebo-controlled study of clonidine (.05 mg 4xd) and desipramine (25 mg 4xd) treatment of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) behaviors in 34 children with TS + ADHD is reported from the Departments of Neurology and Pediatrics, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore, MD. Desipramine was superior to clonidine in improving measures of ADHD, including parent-completed global linear analogue rating scale, hyperactivity subscale of the child behavior checklist (CBCL), and teacher CBCL subscales for nervous/overactive, anxious, and unpopular items. More than two thirds of families requested continuation of desipramine at the completion of the study. Neither drug made tics worse. (Singer HS, Denckla MB et al. The treatment of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder in Tourette's syndrome: A double-blind placebo-controlled study with clonidine and desipramine. Pediatrics January 1995;95:74-81). (Reprints: Dr Harvey S Singer, Department of Neurology, Harvey 811, Johns Hopkins Hospital, 600 North Wolfe Street, Baltimore, MD 21287).

COMMENT. Desipramine is a more effective medication than clonidine for the treatment of ADHD in children with Tourette's syndrome. The authors hesitate to recommend the general use of desipramine. A review of the literature uncovered at least four sudden, unexplained deaths in children receiving desipramine. Careful monitoring, especially of the cardiovascular system, is advised.

Behavioral improvements found with tricyclic antidepressants and the positive effects of stimulant medication on cognitive tasks have prompted combined drug therapy of ADHD. Side effects occurred more frequently when a combination of desipramine and methylphenidate was employed compared to either medication used alone. (see Progress in Pediatric Neurology II, PNB Publ, 1994, pp210-211).

Bilineal transmission (from maternal and paternal sides) of Tourette's syndrome, especially in families in which the proband's symptoms were most severe, was a frequent finding (approx 1/3) in a study at the University of Rochester School of Medicine, NY, and University College London Medical School, London, UK. (Kurlan R et al. Neurology Dec 1994;44:2336-2342).

DYSLEXIA AND SMALL GENU OF CORPUS CALLOSUM

Corpus callosum morphology was studied by MRI in 16 children (mean age, 9.7 yrs) with developmental dyslexia and matched controls at the Center for Clinical and Developmental Neuropsychology, University of Georgia,