Cureus

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Abstract

Neuropathic Pain in Neurological Diseases

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Categories: Anesthesiology, Neurology, Pain Management
Keywords: chronic pain, neuropathic pain, neurological diseases

How to cite this abstract
Zis P (August 08, 2021) Neuropathic Pain in Neurological Diseases. Cureus 13(8): a627

Abstract

Pain is a complex somatic and emotional phenomenon. Causes of pain are numerous and include traumas, medical diseases and genetic disorders. The universality of pain as a human experience, as well as the high prevalence of pain, underscore the significance of this symptom.

Neuropathic is the pain that arises as a direct consequence of a lesion or disease affecting the somatosensory nervous system and can broadly be divided into peripheral neuropathic pain (PNP) and central neuropathic pain (CNP).

Causes of PNP include single mononeuropathies, such as carpal or cubital tunnel syndrome, and polyneuropathies, such as the typical symmetrical length-dependent polyneuropathy or other – less common – such as the asymmetrical sensory neuronopathy or the asymmetrical sensorimotor polyneuropathy, often in the context of systemic vasculitis. Regardless the cause of the polyneuropathy (i.e. diabetes, excessive alcohol consumption, chemotherapy etc.) 60% of patients with polyneuropathy will suffer from PNP. Causes of CNP include tumors, traumas (i.e. spinal cord injury) and central nervous system's diseases including cerebrovascular incidents that have affected the somatosensory nervous system (i.e. thalamic stroke) and multiple sclerosis.

The overall clinical picture, the history of the presenting complaints as well as the findings from the neurological examination can guide the clinician to organize am appropriate diagnostic approach in order to make the correct diagnosis and decide the further management.

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Published 08/08/2021

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