

Ticket to Enter: Degenerative Disorders Fact Sheet

Briefly define it, state the cause if known, name a few classic S/S you may see in a patient:

1. Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis-

Rapidly progressive, neurologic disorder with degeneration of upper and lower motor neurons that leads to progressive and eventually debilitating muscle weakness. Cause unknown: upper extremities become stiff, lower extremities are flaccid and atrophied. S/S: weakness spreading to multiple muscles, atrophy, dysphagia, pain, spasticity, drooling, constipation, respiratory difficulties.

2. Huntington's Disease

Progressive, degenerative brain disorder that results in involuntary movements and mental deterioration. Caused by abnormal gene causing too much dopamine in HD due to deficiency in neurotransmitters, GABA and Ach. S/S: chorea (jerky, brisk, purposeless movements, involuntary body movements), slurred speech, facial grimacing, and mental cognitive/psych decline.

3. Multiple Sclerosis-

Chronic, progressive, degenerative, disorder of the CNS with demyelination of nerve fibers. Cause unknown. S/S: impaired movement, tinnitus, fatigue, paresthesia, pain, decreased short term memory.

4. Myasthenia Gravis-

Autoimmune disease characterized by muscle fatigue and weakness from inadequate Ach receptor stimulation due to ACh receptor antibodies that attack acetylcholine receptors. Cause unknown: antibodies are produced against ACh receptor sites. This results in a fewer number of acetylcholine receptor sites so the acetylcholine molecules can't attach to these receptor sites and stimulate normal muscle contraction. S/S: fluctuating weakness of skeletal muscles.

5. Parkinson's Disease

Chronic, progressive neurodegenerative disorder characterized by slowness in the initiation and execution of movement, increased muscle tone, tremor at rest, and gait disturbance. Cause unknown: but can be due to lack of dopamine in the brain due to degeneration of dopamine producing neurons causing an imbalance of dopamine and acetylcholine. S/S: tremor, rigidity, akinesia, and postural instability.