

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-

Definition- Rapidly progressive neurologic disorder with degeneration of upper and lower motor neurons that eventually causes a debilitating muscle weakness.

Cause- unknown

S/s-Weakness in multiple muscles, atrophy of muscles, dysphagia, dysarthria, pain, sleep disorders, spasticity, drooling, constipation, reflux, respiratory difficulties

2. Huntington's Disease

Definition- Progressive, degenerative brain disorder that results in involuntary movements and mental deterioration. A deficiency in the neurotransmitters GABA and Ach.

Cause- Genetic disorder, autosomal dominant disorder, an abnormal gene identified.

S/s- jerky, brisk, and purposeless movements, involuntary abnormal movements, writhing and twisting of the face, tics/grimacing, slurred speech, dysphagia, scattered gait, incontinence, personality, and emotions leading to poor judgment, memory loss, decreased attention span, delusions, anger, dementia

3. Multiple Sclerosis-

Definition- Chronic progressive, degenerative, disorder of the CNS with demyelination of nerve fibers.

Cause- unknown but some research for viral, immune, genetic involvement

S/s- severe fatigue, impaired movement (weak or heavy limbs with numbness and tingling), stiffness, poor balance, visual disturbances, tinnitus, dysphagia, incontinence, paresthesia, pain, decreased concentration, and mood swings

4. Myasthenia Gravis-

Definition- The course is slow with periods of remission, exacerbations, and stabilizations. A Autoimmune disease characterized by muscle fatigue and weakness from inadequate Ach receptor stimulation due to Ach receptor antibodies that attack acetylcholine receptors.

Cause- unknown

S/s- weakness of skeletal muscles, muscles greatly affected in ADLs, trunk, shoulder, limb, or neck weakness, exacerbations can be caused by emotions, trauma, pregnancy, menses, temperature changes, secondary illness, hypokalemia, and medications.

5. **Parkinson's Disease**

Definitions- 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 thought to 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- Tremors, rigidity, akinesia, and postural instability, depression, anxiety, apathy, pain, fatigue, short term memory loss, sweating, flushing, orthostatic hypotension, urinary retention, constipation, sleep disorders. As the disease progresses dementia, hallucinations or psychosis can occur.