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 neurological disorder with the degeneration of upper and lower motor neurons leading to progressive and debilitating muscle weakness. Manifestations include weakness spreading to multiple muscles with possible atrophy. As it advances, dysphagia, dysarthria, pain, sleep disorders, spasticity, drooling, constipation, and respiratory difficulties may occur.

2. Huntington's Disease

   Progressive degenerative brain disorder that results in the involuntary movement and mental deterioration. It results from the deficiency of neurotransmitters GABA and Ach. Clinical manifestations include mental/psych decline, jerky, brinks, and purposeless movements, twisting of the face limbs and body, facial tics, slurred speech, dysphagia, bladder or bowel incontinence.

3. Multiple Sclerosis-

   Chronic, progressive degenerative disorder of the CNS with the demyelination of nerve fibers. Cause is unknown. Some debate concerning precipitating factors such as infection, injury, emotional stress, and pregnancy. Manifestations include severe fatigue, impaired movement, stiffness, numbness and tingling, visual and auditory disturbances, loss of bowel or bladder function, cognitive and emotional problems.

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. Clinical manifestations include fluctuation muscle weakness of the skeletal muscles (those used for moving the eyes, eyelids, chewing, swallowing, speech, and even breathing) trunk or shoulder weakness.

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 disturbances. Cause unknown but thought to be the lack of dopamine in the brain. Cardinal signs are tremors, rigidity, akinesia, and postural instability along with depression, anxiety, fatigue, or memory loss. As the disease progresses, dementia, hallucinations, and psychosis can occur.