

More about Ivlg

The January 2007 *European Journal of Neurology* (Volume 14, Issue 1, pp. 60-65) published an article by a group of researchers from Norway. Elisabeth Farbu, MD, Department of Neurology, Haukeland, Bergen, is the lead author of the study that concludes a single dose of Ivlg in patients with post-polio syndrome had a clinical effect on pain, but there was no significant effect upon motor strength and fatigue, and that the results are promising but not conclusive because of the low number of patients (20).

In *Post-polio syndrome patients treated with intravenous immunoglobulin: a double-blinded randomized controlled pilot study* (E. Farbu, T. Rekand, E. Vik-Mo, H. Lygren, N.E. Gilhus, J.A. Aarli), the researchers describe the patients as ambulatory. Several criteria, including, but not exclusively, cardiac disease, diabetes, previous Ivlg treatment or an ongoing autoimmune disease excluded polio survivors from the study.

The polio survivors who participated in the study were evaluated four times, with a full physical and neurological examination; muscle strength measurement with a dynamometer; the Fatigue Severity Scale (FSS); the Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) and the Pain Drawing Instrument; various blood tests and a cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) tap.

The twenty participants (13 women and 7 men) were randomly selected to receive either the Ivlg or placebo (saline). Headaches were frequently reported and attributed to the lumbar puncture and CSF tap. Seven recipients of the Ivlg and one of the placebo reported chills and/or fever during and after the infusion.

It is important to note that the positive effect on pain disappeared during the second three months and after six months, no significant difference was found.

Why try Ivlg? It is tried in polio survivors because researchers suggest that some of the post-polio symptoms are caused by an immunological activation that can be recognized by the increase of proinflammatory cytokines, such as tumour necrosis factor- α (TNF- α), interferon- γ (IFN- γ), interleukin (IL)-10 and IL 4 mRNA. Ivlg has broad immunosuppressive effects and when given to polio survivors with post-polio syndrome it is hypothesized Ivlg would improve fatigue, pain and muscle strength. ▲

To read the complete article, go to www.blackwell-synergy.com/loi/ENE

Coming in June on CBC Radio One

Ideas, hosted by Paul Kennedy on CBC Radio One (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), will feature a two-part series, "Remembering Polio," on June 18 and 25 at 9 pm. For details about this series, presented by Maria Meindl, visit www.cbc.ca/ideas/schedule1.html. ▲

All Iowa Reads about Polio

The 2007 All Iowa Reads selection is *Splendid Solution: Jonas Salk and the Conquest of Polio* by Jeffrey Kluger. As part of the program, the Iowa Center for the Book is collecting stories from Iowans about what they remember of the impact of polio and the development of the polio vaccine. Log on to www.iowapoliohistories.org to contribute your story. ▲

Veteran Receives Back Benefits

A 76-year-old veteran, who has requested to be unnamed, of the Korean War and Hurricane Katrina has been granted a \$1.7 million claim by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

In late 2005, while at Memphis VA Medical Center's Spinal Cord Injury Center, he met a Paralyzed Veterans' national service officer (NSO) who realized that the veteran might have a claim to benefits – even after five decades. It needed to be determined that he had developed polio during his service or in the year immediately after leaving the service 55 years ago.

Paralyzed Veterans' local and national offices reviewed the case and pushed the veteran's claim to VA and succeeded. For more information contact the Paralyzed Veterans of America at www.pva.org. ▲