Letters to the Editor

Cerebrovascular Disease in the Postpartum Period

To the Editor:

Trommer et al. recently reported a patient who experienced focal cerebral ischemia in the postpartum period. They concluded that the changes present on angiography were a manifestation of vasospasm secondary to eclampsia.

Brick recently reported a similar case in which a young normotensive woman also experienced focal neurologic deficits demonstrated in our patient with postpartum eclampsia and focal etiologic role for female reproductive steroids in the vasculopathy of cerebral vessels in the absence of eclampsia. We appreciate Dr. Brick’s comments regarding a possible etiologic role for female reproductive steroids in the vasculopathy of cerebral vessels in the absence of eclampsia. However, the decline in the incidence of stroke has been reliably reported only in the prospective population studies from Rochester, Minnesota.

The following is in reply:

To the Editor:

We appreciate Dr. Brick’s comments regarding a possible etiologic role for female reproductive steroids in the vasculopathy demonstrated in our patient with postpartum eclampsia and focal cerebral ischemia. A “hormonal factor” was also postulated to play a role in the postpartum cerebral angiopathy described by Manelfe et al. in which headache, vomiting, seizures, and/or stroke were accompanied by diffuse segmental narrowing and dilatation of cerebral vessels in the absence of eclampsia.

We have recently had occasion to care for a previously healthy 34-year-old woman who developed headache, hypertension, and a right frontal intracerebral hematoma without subarachnoid hemorrhage approximately 1 week following total abdominal hysterectomy and treatment with estrogens (Premarin). Angiography revealed diffuse bilateral vasospasm (later shown to be reversible) in branches of the middle and posterior cerebral arteries and showed no evidence of vascular malformation. These findings suggest that efforts to comprehend the influence of hormonal alterations on the cerebral vasculature merit further pursuit.

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References


Decline in the Incidence of Stroke

To the Editor:

In past years, there have been interesting reports about stroke mortality and incidence. According to these reports, stroke mortality has declined in many countries. However, the decline in the incidence of stroke has been reliably reported only in the prospective population studies from Rochester, Minnesota.

Since my findings show that the incidences of all categories of stroke in both men and women were lower in 1978–1980 than in 1972–1973, it would be interesting to know whether the incidence of stroke is also decreasing in other countries.

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References

Decline in the incidence of stroke.
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