

Medical Information and Guidance

Astasia-abasia :: Definition, Symptoms, Causes and Treatment

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and Treatment

Astasia-abasia :: Definition, Symptoms, Causes



Astasia-abasia Definition

Astasia-abasia is a Greek term which refers to the inability to stand upright due to lack of motor coordination. The term 'astasia' means inability to stand and 'abasia' refers to the inability to walk properly. Patients of this disorder are, however, able to move their legs naturally while walking or lying down. In this condition, sufferers often exhibit unusual and dramatic disturbances such as swaying violently in various directions and falling when someone tries to catch them.

The condition is also known by the name of Blocq's disease, named after Paul Blocq who diagnosed and

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described this condition for the first time. Although this condition seems to be psychogenic, it has been classified by experts as a 'conversion disorder' based on its symptoms.

Astasia-abasia Causes

The exact causative factors for this disorder are still unknown to medical experts. However, they have outlined a few factors which have a possibility of causing this disorder. This condition is believed to be the impact of extreme emotional disturbances such as stress or any other psychiatric trouble. According to findings of research, affected individuals also suffer from depression. This disorder may also occur due to certain injury or physical abuse. Children may develop this condition in case they face extreme sexual and physical abuse. Certain types of phobias such as basiphobia, basophobia and stasiphobia are also found to be related with this disorder. Basiphobia is the fear of falling when standing upright and walking.

Astasia-abasia Symptoms

The condition is exhibited by certain typical characteristics. These include:

- Difficulty in walking
- Waddling movements like a duck
- Tremors
- Throwing out arms violently to retain balance
- Odd gyrations of the body
- Stiffness of muscles
- Buckling of the knees and shaking of the body when patients try to stand upright
- Jumping fits without motor control
- Possible loss of sense in the lower limbs and experiencing paralysis
- Dragging of feet while walking
- Sensory disturbances
- Hunched posture with head and neck bending in forward direction

Astasia abasia Diagnosis

There are no proper methods to diagnose this unusual astasia abasia syndrome. The diagnosis is done primarily on the basis of the potential signs that manifest themselves. In severe cases, there might be a possibility of presence of neurological disorders according to medical experts.

Certain signs, which help in diagnosis of this disease, involve:

- Numbness or paralysis of the lower body part
- Normal strength in muscles opposite the paralyzed muscles
- Reflexes are normal

Tests which are conducted are done generally for detecting neurological problems. Electromyogram (EMG) and Nerve Conduction Velocity testing are found to be normal in muscles which are paralyzed. EEG or electroencephalogram will be normal in seizures that occur in this conversion disorder. In limbs that have no sense, the Somato Sensory Evoked Potential testing result will be normal.

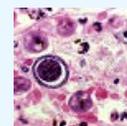
Astasia abasia Treatment

The treatment for this disorder will include a combination of therapies. There are separate programs to bring stability and positivity in the life of the patient, reduce pain and enhance fitness.

Psychotherapy is used in case of patients suffering from psychological disturbances and extreme mental

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stress. Occupational therapy is provided to treat sufferers by improvising their motor movements and also reasoning capabilities. Physical and exercise therapies are provided to help teach the patient to cope with the movement disability and gain strength. Poor balance can be managed with using a cane or a walker.

Leg braces and in-shoe splints, if provided, can help patients to get the foot alignment right for standing and walking. Group therapy will teach the patient to overcome his disabilities and interact with others so that he can have a normal social life. Pharmaceutical drugs are available to treat excess anxiety and depressive disorders.

Astasia abasia Prognosis

In this disorder, the chance of recovery of patients is good. The symptoms generally disappear within 2 weeks. Although some individuals may recover really fast, there is high chance of a recurrence within the first 1 year. The disability may get more complicated if the environment is chaotic and not supportive.

This is a serious neurological disorder that, if present, should be treated immediately. Patients of this condition should be kept under strict observance to ensure that their symptoms do not make a comeback. Family members and friends should make sure that the sufferer is kept away from stressful situations.



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