



Pseudotumor Cerebri

What is pseudotumor cerebri?

Pseudotumor cerebri literally means "false brain tumor." It is likely due to high pressure caused by the buildup or poor absorption of cerebrospinal fluid in the subarachnoid space surrounding the brain. The disorder is most common in women between the ages of 20 and 50. Symptoms of pseudotumor cerebri, which include headache, nausea, vomiting, and pulsating intracranial noises, closely mimic symptoms of brain tumors.

Is there any treatment?

Obesity, other treatable diseases, and some medications can cause raised intracranial pressure and symptoms of pseudotumor cerebri. A thorough medical history and physical examination is needed to evaluate these factors. If a diagnosis of pseudotumor cerebri is confirmed, close, repeated ophthalmologic exams are required to monitor any changes in vision. Drugs may be used to reduce fluid buildup and to relieve pressure. Weight loss and cessation of certain drugs (including oral contraceptives, tetracycline, and a variety of steroids) may lead to improvement. Surgery may be needed to remove pressure on the optic nerve. Therapeutic shunting, which involves surgically inserting a tube to drain CSF from the lower spine into the abdominal cavity, may be needed to remove excess CSF and relieve CSF pressure.

What is the prognosis?

The disorder may cause progressive, permanent visual loss in some patients. In some cases, pseudotumor cerebri recurs.

What research is being done?

The NINDS conducts and supports research on disorders of the brain and nervous system, including pseudotumor cerebri. This research focuses primarily on increasing scientific understanding of these disorders and finding ways to prevent, treat, and cure them.

Select [this link](#) to view a list of studies currently seeking patients.

Organizations

Intracranial Hypertension Research Foundation

6517 Buena Vista Drive
Vancouver, WA 98661

<http://www.IHRFoundation.org>

360-693-4473

National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD)

P.O. Box 1968

(55 Kenosia Avenue)

Danbury, CT 06813-1968

<http://www.rarediseases.org>

203-744-0100, Voice Mail 800-999-NORD (6673)

Pseudotumor Cerebri Support Network

8247 Riverside Drive

Powell, OH 43065

<http://www.angelfire.com/ok/PTCSupportNetwork/>

This information was developed by the [National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke](#).

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. NINDS Pseudotumor Cerebri Information Page. Available at: <http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/pseudotumorcerebri/pseudotumorcerebri.htm>. Last accessed November 6, 2012.

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