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Reversible motor and sensory peripheral neuropathy in a patient following acute carbon monoxide intoxication.

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Central nervous system complications following carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning are well reported in the literature but peripheral neuropathy is under-recognized. We report the clinical and electrophysiological studies of the transient peripheral neuropathy developed in a patient following acute CO intoxication. A 27-year-old woman was found unconscious with severe hypoxia and 34.5% serum level of carboxyhemoglobin. She progressed favourably after hyperbaric oxygen therapy. Neurological examination revealed bilateral pyramidal signs. The patient referred weakness and sensory abnormalities in her right foot. An electroencephalogram did not show focal abnormalities and brain magnetic resonance was normal. Needle electromyography of weak right tibialis anterior muscle showed a reduced recruitment pattern but no spontaneous activity. Electroneurographic evaluation revealed findings compatible with a motor and sensory peripheral neuropathy in nerves of both lower limbs. In few months complete clinical recovery was reached, and the electroneurography showed normality a year later. Reversible peripheral neuropathy should be considered as a possible neurological complication following acute CO poisoning. The electrophysiological studies were essential for its diagnosis and follow up.

PMID: 15773259 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]

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