Varicella-zoster virus meningo-rhombencephalitis presenting as Ramsey Hunt

A 45-year-old woman on etanercept for rheumatoid arthritis presented with an acute right Bell palsy and auricular herpetic rash (Ramsey Hunt syndrome). Despite IV acyclovir, she developed headache, vertigo, severe vomiting, and evidence of a right peripheral audiovestibular loss (figure 1, A and B, video 1 on the Neurology® Web site at www.neurology.org). Ongoing symptoms indicated CSF examination, which showed a pleocytosis and positive varicella-zoster PCR, and an MRI that displayed abnormal brainstem signal (figure 2, A and B). Although there was unequivocal peripheral audiovestibular loss,1 the persistence of vertigo beyond 3 days is a red flag suggesting central involvement,2 here presumably resulting from the known effect of etanercept on impairing leukocyte migration3 into the brain.
Diego Kaski, MBBS, MRCP, Nicholas Davies, MBBS, MRCP, PhD, Barry M. Seemungal, MBBS, MRCP, PhD, London, UK

Author contributions: D.K. reviewed the clinical case and prepared the manuscript, figures, and video. B.M.S. and N.D. performed the clinical examination, commented critically on the manuscript, and B.M.S. approved its final version.

Acknowledgment: The authors thank Luca Seemungal for video editing.

The authors report no disclosures relevant to the manuscript. Go to Neurology.org for full disclosures.

Correspondence & reprint requests to Dr. Seemungal: b.seemungal@imperial.ac.uk


NeuroImages Are Free at www.neurology.org!

All Neurology® NeuroImages can now be freely accessed on the Neurology Web site. See them at www.neurology.org, where you can also sign up for journal email alerts and check out our other online features, including the Resident & Fellow section, Neurology: Clinical Practice, and the weekly Neurology Podcasts.
Varicella-zoster virus meningo-rhombencephalitis presenting as Ramsey Hunt
Diego Kaski, Nicholas Davies and Barry M. Seemungal
Neurology 2012;79:2291-2292
DOI 10.1212/WNL.0b013e31827689c2

This information is current as of December 3, 2012

Updated Information & Services
including high resolution figures, can be found at:
http://www.neurology.org/content/79/23/2291.full.html

Supplementary Material
Supplementary material can be found at:
http://www.neurology.org/content/suppl/2012/12/02/79.23.2291.DC1

References
This article cites 3 articles, 0 of which you can access for free at:
http://www.neurology.org/content/79/23/2291.full.html##ref-list-1

Subspecialty Collections
This article, along with others on similar topics, appears in the following collection(s):
All Education
http://www.neurology.org/cgi/collection/all_education
Vertigo
http://www.neurology.org/cgi/collection/vertigo
Viral infections
http://www.neurology.org/cgi/collection/viral_infections

Permissions & Licensing
Information about reproducing this article in parts (figures, tables) or in its entirety can be found online at:
http://www.neurology.org/misc/about.xhtml#permissions

Reprints
Information about ordering reprints can be found online:
http://www.neurology.org/misc/addir.xhtml#reprintsus