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Case 1

AANP Slide seminar
1960

35 year old woman first seen by the reporting physician at the age of 35 years. Two years earlier she developed polyuria and polydipsia, and after a diagnosis of diabetes insipidus was made she was treated with

pitressin in oil. Following an attack of "stomach flu", during which she had fever of 104°, nausea and abdominal cramps, she developed pain in the lower extremities and marked generalized weakness. She had amenorrhea since age 34.

The family history indicated that her father died from carcinoma of the bowel, a sister died from carcinoma of the breast, and her mother had surgery for carcinoma of the breast.

Physical examination revealed swelling and tenderness of both lower extremities. She responded to aspirin and vitamins. At age 35 she developed somnolence, severe pain in the lower extremities and a septic temperature. The only physical finding was severe hyperesthesia of the lower extremities. For a time she was disoriented. Skull films were negative and air studies showed a normal ventricular system. The cerebrospinal fluid protein was 126 mgm.%, the Pandy reaction 4 plus, serology negative, gold curve all zeros, spinal fluid glucose 56 mgm.%. She responded to penicillin but continued to have periods of disorientation, trance-like states and extreme weakness. Because of the possibility of an infiltrating glioma in the hypothalamus, a course of deep x-ray treatment was administered (5300 R for 38 days through five portals). She improved for a time but, a year later, she had another attack characterized by stupor and fever. She was admitted to the hospital for the last time a year later, exhibiting signs of myxedema. The cerebrospinal fluid pressure was 170 mm., with increased protein (167 mgm.%), 5 leucocytes and a glucose of 75 mgm.%. Because of the low protein-bound-iodine and radio-active-iodine determination she was given thyroid after which the stupor lessened and she was able to speak. After a test with 25 units ACTH the blood corticoids rose from 8.3 mgm. to 43.8 mgm. Despite supportive therapy she did poorly and died.