

Case 2

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Clinical Abstract:

A man developed a chronic progressive global dementia starting at age 69. Two years later he entered a nursing home, where he remained until his death at age 79.

The patient had a history of industrial exposure to inorganic mercury. The family requested an autopsy restricted to the brain to investigate whether mercury intoxication was the cause of the patient's dementia.

The brain weighed 675 g (Six hundred and seventy-five grams). It was simply described as atrophic. In addition to the lesions shown in the section provided, several small recent infarcts were identified in the fusiform gyrus, globus pallidus, cerebellum, and occipital cortex. There was no gross or microscopic evidence of cerebellar atrophy.

Material submitted: One H&E and one unstained section of the hippocampus and temporal cortex.

Points for discussion: 1. Diagnosis
2. Possible role of mercury intoxication