

Abstract

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Encephalopathy due to carnitine deficiency in an adult patient with gluten enteropathy.

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BACKGROUND: A 48-year-old male patient had two episodes of fever, headache, confusion and seizures following an upper respiratory tract infection.

FINDINGS: Electroencephalography (EEG) revealed diffuse slowing of background activity. Plasma free carnitine and serum lipid levels were low; fecal fat content and serum antigliadin antibodies were elevated. Duodenal biopsy was compatible with gluten enteropathy. Symptoms improved after the patient was started on a gluten-free diet and carnitine replacement therapy. No recurrence was observed within a four-year follow-up.

CONCLUSION: Carnitine deficiency in adulthood is unusual, and encephalopathy due to carnitine deficiency as a result of celiac disease has not been described previously.

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