Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis

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Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis
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Signs and Symptoms

Underlying Pathophysiology

ALS is a progressive, non-hereditary disease that affects the motor neurons. These neurons connect the brain to the spinal cord and muscles. As ALS progresses, muscles are no longer activated because the motor neurons are affected. Signs and symptoms include muscle weakness, atrophy, sensory loss, fasciculations, and hyper-reflexia (Gordon, 2013, pg. 391). As the disease progresses, patients will require braces, canes, walkers, and eventually wheelchairs (Lawton, Brown, Alexander, Li, Wulff, Lawson, et al., 2015). The genetic basis of ALS is undetermined, however, there is familial clustering that can suggest a genetic foundation (Wingo, Cutler, Yarab, Kelly, & Glass, 2011, pg. 1). The heritability of ALS is estimated to be 5-15% (Porth, 2014). The heritability of ALS is estimated to be 5-15% (Porth, 2014). The genetic basis of ALS is undetermined, however, there is familial clustering that can suggest a genetic foundation (Wingo, Cutler, Yarab, Kelly, & Glass, 2011, pg. 1). With such uncertainty about the mechanisms of this disease, research is consistently being performed for more information.

Nursing Care

Nursing Care

Conclusion

Due to the complexity, constant research must continue to be conducted

Research should focus on finding the genetic mutations, causes, and eventually a way to avoid or cure the disease

Presentation of signs and symptoms is important to diagnose, and ruling out other mimic diseases is vital to diagnosis

A caring and trusting attitude from the primary care provider is important to establish rapport.

When early stages of disease, quality of life for the individual should be discussed for future plans, including palliative measures.

References


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