A 64-year-old man was admitted to our clinic because of an unstable gait. One year before admission, his gait became unsteady, and he fell three or four times daily, usually backward. His movements slowed and had inability achieve vertical gaze. He was noticed to have squint eyes at this time. Based on his clinical signs, we diagnosed him as progressive supranuclear palsy (PSP). On a T2-weighted MR image (TE/TR=4,000/180 msec), atrophy of the midbrain tegmentum was observed on a mid-sagittal image (Fig. 1A lower). The atrophy of the rostral midbrain tegmentum looks like the bill of hummingbird (Fig. 1A upper). Also he showed squint eyes on an axial image (Fig. 1B).

PSP is a neurodegenerative disorder characterized by supranuclear ophthalmoplegia mainly affecting the vertical gaze, pseudobulbar palsy, dysarthria and dystonic rigidity. The atrophy of the rostral midbrain tegmentum on a mid-sagittal MRI looks like the bill of hummingbird (Fig. 1A upper) and is therefore termed the “hummingbird” sign (1, 2). However, “squint eyes” sign on an axial image may be another useful feature for diagnosing PSP.
References


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