Slowly Expanding Basilar Artery Territory Infarction Detected by Serial Diffusion-weighted MRI

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We describe an occluded basilar artery at the proximal portion with slowly expanding infarction to the distal region that was detected by diffusion-weighted MRI (DWI) in a 93-year-old unconscious woman. At 8 hours after onset, acute bilateral pontine infarction with small multiple lesions in the cerebellum and the occipital lobe were evident on DWI images (Picture 1 upper row). MR angiography revealed a basilar artery occlusion (Picture 2). Despite being mute with tetrapalsy, she could respire regularly without either oxygen support or respiratory ventilation. Her pupils were anisocoric (right, 4 mm; left, 2 mm). Light reflexes were prompt in the left eye, absent in the right, and the corneal reflex was bilaterally normal. A second MRI at 16 days after onset showed expansion of the ischemic lesions to the distal territory (Picture 1 lower row). In acute posterior-
circulation stroke, the extent of DWI lesion involvement can be highly variable (1, 2). Slowly progressive deterioration to the distal segment over several days accompanied by MRI evidence of infarction spread is rare (3). Expanding infarction can be diagnosed by DWI.

References


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