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## Upper Motor Neuron Involvement in Motor Neuron Disease: Motor Evoked Potentials Study

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### - Abstract -

**Background & Objectives** : Motor evoked potentials(MEPs) to magnetic trans cranial stimulation were performed to evaluate upper motor neuron involvement and relationship to lower motor neuron involvement in motor neuron disease patients. **Method** : MEPs were obtained in the 17 consecutive patients with motor neuron disease. These patients were divided into three group based on clinical evidence of upper and lower motor neuron involvement, bulbar symptom; amyotrophic lateral sclerosis(ALS), progressive muscular atrophy(PMA), progressive bulbar palsy(PBP). MEPs were recorded from abductor pollicis brevis and abductor hallucis muscles. Abnormal MEPs were defined by delayed central motor conduction time or absent MEP. **Results** : MEPs were abnormal in 64%(11/17) of patients; 100%(7/7) in ALS, 64%(4/7) in PMA, 0%(0/3) in PBP respectively. In 68 total recording muscles, 34 muscles had evidence of motor weakness and showed abnormal responses in 59%(20/34). Whereas 34 muscles with normal strength, only 3%(1/34) of muscles showed abnormal response. **Conclusion** : MEPs are well correlated with upper motor neuron signs in ALS and may detect masking upper motor neuron signs in PMA. The muscles with lower motor neuron sign(weakness) usually relate with abnormal MEPs reponses.

**Key Words** : Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Motor evoked potential, Upper motor neuron

UMN 가 (pro-  
gressive muscular atrophy)

(motor neuron disease) 1,  
(upper motor neuron:UMN) (lower motor neuron:LMN)

(denervation)  
(wide spread denervation)

가 2

LMN

(hyperreflexia)

가  
(spasticity)

UMN

가

UMN

가

LMN

UMN

가 3,4

(transcranial magnetic stimulation)  
(magnetic evoked potential)

UMN

가 5-8

(progressive bulbar palsy)

(central motor pathway)

가

LMN

UMN

3.

(median nerve)

(posterior tibial nerve)

Cadwell MES-10

9cm

2.0 Tesla

Cadwell Excel

(abductor pollicis brevis)

(belly-tendon method)

5-6

(abductor

hallucis)

(abductor hallucis)

3-4

(popliteal fossa)

60%

60%

가

3 1

4

20%

1.

1999 7 10

가

17

latency)

가 가  
peak-to-peak

(onset

duction time)

(central motor con-

2.

4.

2 UMN LMN

가

10

LMN

가

UMN

2

: 21.7msec)<sup>11</sup>.

2

: 11.6msec,

5.

<sup>2</sup>-test

2

(absent MEPs)  
(abnormal central conduction time)

1. (Table 1) 19 22 , 3

가 7 , 7 , 3 Table 3

17 Table

1 7 UMN

5 가

, 3 (ankle clonus)가

4

3. (Table 4, Fig. 1, 2)

MRC grade IV

2. (Table 2, 3)

14

2

7 7 14 10

(p = 0.01).

4 10 10

3 18 10 (p = 0.01).

**Table 1.** Clinical features of motor neuron disease patients

| Patients | number | Sex(M:F) | Age(years)   | Disease duration(months) | Appel Score* | Bulbar signs |
|----------|--------|----------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| ALS      | 7      | 4:3      | 46.1° ± 11.1 | 30.6° ± 30.1             | 76.2° ± 18.9 | 2            |
| PMA      | 7      | 5:2      | 52.3° ± 10.5 | 47.7° ± 39.6             | 84.6° ± 32.6 | 3            |
| PBP      | 3      | 2:1      | 48.6° ± 15.9 | 7.7° ± 4.5               | 46.0° ± 17.3 | 1            |
| Total    | 17     | 11:6     | 50.4° ± 11.8 | 33.6° ± 33.9             | 74.1° ± 24.8 | 6            |

\*See reference 12. Briefly, this scale indicates 30 points for normal and 164 points for maximal dysfunction  
ALS: Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, PMA: Progressive Muscular Atrophy, PBP: Progressive Bulbar Palsy

**Table 2.** Patients with MEPs alteration

| Patinetns   | Abnormal at one limb | Abnormal at two limb | Abnormal at three limb | Abnormal at four limb | Abnormal at least one limb |
|-------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| ALS(n=7)    | 2/7                  | 4/7                  | 0/7                    | 1/7                   | 7/7                        |
| PMA(n=7)    | 1/7                  | 2/7                  | 1/7                    | 0/7                   | 4/7                        |
| PBP(n=3)    | 0/3                  | 0/3                  | 0/3                    | 0/3                   | 0/3                        |
| Total(n=17) | 3/17                 | 6/17                 | 1/17                   | 1/17                  | 11/17                      |

**Table 3.** MEPs findings in motor neuron disease patients

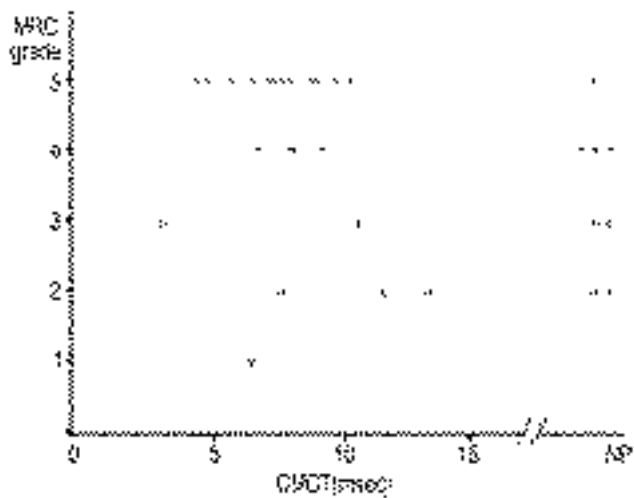
| Patients | Normal MEPs | Absent MEPs | Abnormal CCT |
|----------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| ALS(n=7) | UL(n=14)    | 7/14        | 0/14         |
|          | LL(n=14)    | 7/14        | 2/14         |
| PMA(n=7) | UL(n=14)    | 12/14       | 1/14         |
|          | LL(n=14)    | 8/14        | 0/14         |
| PBP(n=3) | UL(n=6)     | 6/6         | 0/6          |
|          | LL(n=6)     | 6/6         | 0/6          |
| Total    | n=68        | 46/68       | 3/68         |

UL: Upper Limb, LL: Lower Limb, CCT: Central Conduction Time

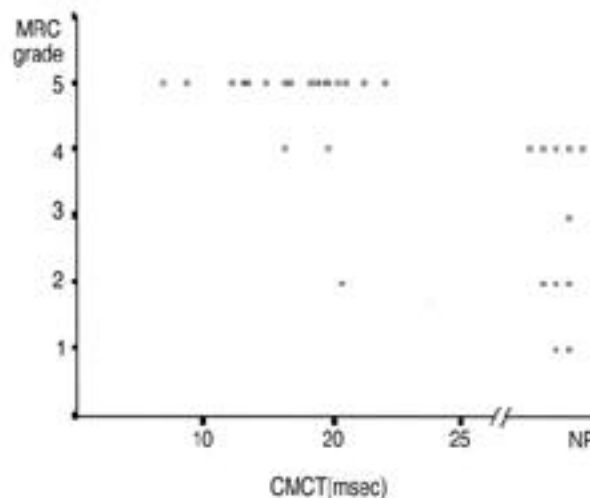
**Table 4.** The relationship between weakness of recording muscles and MEPs abnormalities

| Patients | Muscles power | Normal MEPs | Abnormal MEPs | p-value |
|----------|---------------|-------------|---------------|---------|
| ALS      | Normal(n=14)  | 12/14       | 2/14          | 0.01    |
|          | Weak*(n=14)   | 4/14        | 10/14         |         |
| PMA      | Normal(n=10)  | 10/10       | 0/10          | 0.01    |
|          | Weak(n=18)    | 8/18        | 10/18         |         |
| PBP      | Normal(n=12)  | 12/12       | 0/12          |         |
|          | Weak(n=0)     | 0/0         | 0/0           |         |
| Total    | Normal(n=36)  | 34/36       | 2/36          | 0.00    |
|          | Weak(n=32)    | 12/32       | 20/32         |         |

\*Weak refers to muscle weakness less than MRC grade IV.



**Figure 1.** Relationship between central motor conduction time (CMCT) and weakness of recording muscle in upper limbs.



**Figure 2.** Relationship between central motor conduction time (CMCT) and weakness of recording muscle in lower limbs.

36 34 12 4  
 32 30.6  
 가  
 (p < 0.01). Table 4 Fig. 1 (motor cortex) (hyperexcitability)  
 Fig. 2 가 15,16  
 7 7  
 14 12  
 가 UMN  
 6,13,14 (presynaptic)  
 17,18  
 UMN LMN 가

: :  
 LMN 15,27  
 가 19,20  
 UMN  
 가  
 21,22  
 UMN  
 UMN  
 (corticospinal tract) 19,20,23  
 가 7  
 가  
 UMN  
 UMN 7 4  
 UMN 가 5 2 1  
 UMN 5 1  
 Misico 10 5  
 UMN 1  
 가 가 (motor neuropathy)  
 가 6 4  
 UMN  
 MRS) (proton 24,25  
 가  
 가  
 가  
 LMN  
 29 UMN  
 UMN 가  
 (Table 4, Fig. 1, 2).  
 UMN LMN  
 UMN 가  
 3 1  
 7.7  
 (pyramidal cell)  
 (myelin) 가  
 30  
 (masseter MEPs) cell) (interneuron) (anterior horn  
 26  
 31. Eisen  
 (threshold), tic) ( )  
 (silent period), 가 21,32, 가  
 (cortical facilitation), 가

33 .  
 , , (synchrony),  
 , 가  
 .  
 UMN LMN UMN  
 LMN (antegrade)  
 가 . LMN  
 (feedback facilitation)  
 UMN 31 ,  
 UMN LMN  
 LMN )  
 가 .  
 (UMN

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