

A tricky progressive weakness

L. Tesolin¹

¹Neurology Unit, Cattinara Hospital, Italy

A 63 years old man, presented with 10 days story of lower limbs weakness, he reported a previous pneumonia treated with antibiotics. Symptoms have been worsened and forced him to use a stick before admission. Neurological examination showed pure motor paresis of lower limbs, with proximal strength graded 3/5 while spared distal movements, conserved flexion plantar reflexes and brisk tendon reflexes. He presented a marked increase of CPK (14799), GOT (741) and GPT (266). Electrophysiological studies showed normal amplitude of motor and sensor nerve action potential and distal conduction velocity, EMG showed a reduced recruitment in ileopsoas and deltoid muscles but no myositic signs. Suspecting a miopathy, he was treated with intravenous infusion of 1 mg metilprednisolone for 5 days. On hospital day 3, the paresis became worse: consisting in inability to lift legs from the bed and areflexia. His CSF examination revealed 130 protein and cell count of 2. Viral-bacterial tests and serological tests for self-directed and paraneoplastic antibodies were negative. Further ENG study showed prolonged F-wave latencies, poor F-wave repeatability and prolonged distal latencies, consistent with demyelination of nerve roots; normal recruitment muscle pattern, no fibrillation. He was treated with immunoglobulins 0.4 mg/kg for 5 days. During the first 5 days of therapy the weakness was spreading to the arms: proximal inability to keep arms lifted, conserved grasp strength; areflexia of upper limbs. Later he started a slow recovery, and 15 days after therapy neurological examination showed no strength deficit in upper limbs and ability to lift lower limbs up for few seconds. This is an example of GBS associated with myopathy; few cases are reported in literature with such increase in CPK. This case should teach to think about GBS even if the clinical pattern is uncommon, in case of prolonged F waves and albumino-citological dissociation.