

Brief Commentary

e Steroid Effects on Upper Limb Functions in a Patient with Cervical Spinal Cord Injury

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A 64-year-old male patient with C4 AIS-C (American Impairment Scale - Cervical) lesion was accepted to our clinic for rehabilitation. There were generalized muscle weakness and sensorial loss in all 4 limbs. He was unable to use his hands in daily living activities. Also, there were diffuse edema, pain and tenderness in his left upper limb. His pain score was 7 according to the visual analog scale (VAS). Considering complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS) as a diagnosis in this patient; he was given prednisolone 24 mg/day and the dose decreased 4 mg per 5 days. When the prednisolone treatment ceased, his edema, pain and tenderness were diminished. Following the treatment, his VAS score was 2, and he had begun to make grasping movements with his left hand. For example, he was able to drink a glass of water and eat a piece of bread.

Systemic corticosteroids are used widely in the treatment of CRPS (1). From the studies, it has been concluded that a short period of corticosteroids has good results (2,3). In our patient, corticosteroid treatment clearly contributed to greatly reduced pain and improved motor functions. CRPS should be considered as a reason for pain and disability in patients with spinal cord injury and steroid treatment should be kept in mind in these patients because of its dramatic effect.

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