“Is the Basic Etiology of Multiple Sclerosis Vascular in Origin?”

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Outline

- The vasculature of the brain
- Brain iron as seen with SWI
- A short history of MS and veins
- Vitamin D considerations
- The vasculature of the neck
- MR images of the veins in the neck
- Future directions
- NICE an international database
Arteries and veins in the brain seen with MRI.

MR angiography (MRA)  
Susceptibility Weighted Imaging (SWI)
Correlating iron deposition with venous structures using SWI

Haacke et al (2010). Evidence of an increase in basal ganglia and thalamic iron content in multiple sclerosis and its vascular implications: An initial analysis with susceptibility weighted imaging.

Submitted to Intern. Angiology.
Midbrain iron increases in the substantia nigra
SWI putative iron content as measured with high pass filtered phase data shows a clear iron increase in younger subjects compared to age matched normals.
SWI and XRF scanning

Brain Iron Detected by SWI High Pass Filtered Phase
Calibrated with Synchrotron X-ray Fluorescence
Hopp et al, JMRI, tentatively accepted for publication.
Dept of Anatomy and Cell Biology, University of Saskatchewan.

SWI: 500μ resolution
XRF: 50μ resolution
SWI vs Flair

SWI 0.5x0.5x2 reveals iron rings surrounding many lesions and more uniform iron deposition in other lesions.

Flair image 0.8x0.8x5

J. Royal Society of Medicine, V99, Nov 2006 pages 589-593.

Perhaps the iron seen with SWI in MS is hemosiderin?

Panel A, intra and extra-cellular iron deposits (ID) encircle a dilated vein (V) in a cerebral MS plaque, Perls’ staining method 150 x.
A short history of MS and veins


A short history of MS and veins


Putnam proposes that the basic etiology of MS is venous obstruction

Tracey Putnam, Boston City Hospital, developed an experimental dog model of venous obstruction to study MS.

At the end of his paper, he stated:

“The similarity between such lesions and many of those seen in cases of multiple sclerosis in man is so striking that the conclusion appears almost inevitable that venular obstruction is the essential immediate antecedent to the formation of typical sclerotic plaques.”

Vitamin D Deficiency and the Vascular System

- Vitamin D has been associated with a variety of cardiovascular diseases including atherosclerosis and increased hypertension.
  - Nemerovski et al. Pharmacotherapy 26; 691-708; 2009.

- “Vitamin D-deficiency has been associated with many systemic disorders, including infectious, inflammatory, and autoimmune conditions, cardiovascular disease, hypertension and atherosclerosis, neuromuscular function, cancer, neurodegenerative diseases, and neuropsychological and functional outcomes in the elderly population.”
  - Cekic and Stein. NeuroTherapeutics, 7; 81-90; 2010.
Paolo Zamboni and his team’s direct angiographic proof

Severe stenosis of the jugular vein.
MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Imaging MS Patients with Ultrasound

Ultrasound (Dr. Zamboni’s conditions):

- Reflux constantly present in the IJV
- Reflux in the deep cerebral veins
- High resolution evidence of stenoses
- Flow not detectable in IJV or VV
- Decreases in IJV cross section when changing from sitting to supine

- Malfunctioning valves can be seen and
- Septal flaps (septum) can be seen.
MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Added value from MRI

- 3D structural information in the head and neck
- More than one stenosis can be seen in one sitting
- Numerous collaterals may be associated with MS
- Temporal information throughout the cardiac cycle across the entire cross section of the vessel is available for flow quantification
- Flow calculation easily performed for all vessels throughout the neck
- Monitor these changes pre and post treatment
We propose a simple first pass protocol to include the following three scans for CCSVI:

- **Pre contrast 2D time of flight MRV**
- **Post contrast time resolved MRA: to find the stenoses**
- **Flow quantification: to find the abnormal fluid dynamics**

And for small veins and iron:

- **3D SWI of the head and neck**

Please visit [www.ms-mri.com](http://www.ms-mri.com) for further details.
Time Resolved MRAV

Change in signal intensity suggests a vascular abnormality.

Flow is reduced in the right IJV.
2D TOF Imaging of the Azygous
Characterization of Lesions

- bone growth of the osteophyte from C1/C2 compressing the jugular
- ectatic carotid artery bifurcation angle causing compressed jugular
- long pencil like severe stenosis
- stenosis or occlusion of jugular veins
- stenosis or occlusion of vertebral veins
- stenosis or occlusion of azygous vein
- abnormal valves of jugular or brachiocephalic vein
- damaged vessel wall
The Hemodynamics of the Brain

- There is a great need to understand the fluid dynamics of the brain and how changes in flow affect the immunological system.

- One might consider calling this area of research: "vascular immunology"

- There are no textbooks that cover this topic nor one that covers a complete fluid dynamic study of the entire neurovascular system.

- Yet these studies have not yet been funded by federal sources because they have been considered too educational and not hypothesis driven. MS provides that hypothesis, but we should not have waited so long or we well might have discovered this source much earlier.
Implications of CCSVI on our understanding of the possible etiology of MS

- Stenoses leads to abnormal hemodynamics.
- Abnormal flow leads to endothelial damage.
- Vessel wall breakdown leads to local iron accumulation.
- Abnormal vessel wall with increased vesicles allows leakage of T cells and iron into surrounding tissue.
- Iron acts as an inflammatory agent exacerbating other effects of loss of vessel wall shear stress.
- Further breakdown of the microvascular system follows creating a pathology opposite to flow.
- Ischemic areas lose cerebral blood volume also from shunting of blood and atrophy of vessels.
Conclusions

- MRI is a powerful means to collect 3D angiographic (both anatomical and functional) information.

- Ultrasound and MRI have the potential to screen MS patients for vascular abnormalities and should be both used.

- The venous system is very complex and flexible. Nevertheless, “multiple stenoses” even in the presence of collaterals which attempt to accommodate the required venous outflow may lead to major neurological problems.

- Knowing the vasculature of the head, neck and spine should lead to new methods of treatment and a better understanding of MS.
Collecting an international database of imaging data should help characterize the various types of vascular abnormalities associated with MS and may also be a means by which to best determine who has the most serious form of vascular abnormalities for which something can be done.

Creating such a database can be accomplished by a collective approach of contributing imaging data before and after treatment to NICE by private centers, hospitals and research centers to allow the collection of 10,000s of cases to characterize the types of vascular problems in MS.

This would provide the fastest and most cost efficient means by which to investigate the role of CCSVI in MS.
How can we not image these MS patients who might have severe vascular abnormalities?

www.ms-mri.com

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the colleagues and students who have helped make this presentation possible and who are helping establish continued research in the direction of CCSVI/SWI:

Jiani Hu, Norman Chung, James Garbern

Jing Jiang, Charbel Habib, Manju Liu, Jin Tang, Saifeng Liu, Wei Feng and many others

Eleanor Barker, Rebecca Cooney, Andrew Katz, Randi Cohen, Joan Beal and many others

John Bienenstock, Arlene Franchetto, Jonathon Grynspan, Mike Noseworthy, Rick Paulseth, Ian Rodger, Brady Wood

Rachel Martis-Laze, Lisa Brownschidle

Juergen Reichenbach, and many others.

Zhen Wu, Daniel Haacke, Bo Wu, Peter Haacke and all my family for putting up with a constant barrage of enthusiasm at home.