



Challenging symptoms in MND

Dr Pat Strubbe

Consultant in Palliative medicine

Sue Ryder Care Nettlebed Hospice



Challenging symptoms

- variable disease
- variable symptoms
- partnership with the patient
- multi disciplinary team
 - GP and District nurses
 - carers
 - Neuro clinic and specialist nurses
 - AHP large role (SALT, OT, Physio, dieticians)
 - social worker
 - SPC team

The challenging symptoms

1. communication
2. pain
3. breathing
4. swallowing affecting nutrition and saliva control
5. mood
6. sexuality and intimacy

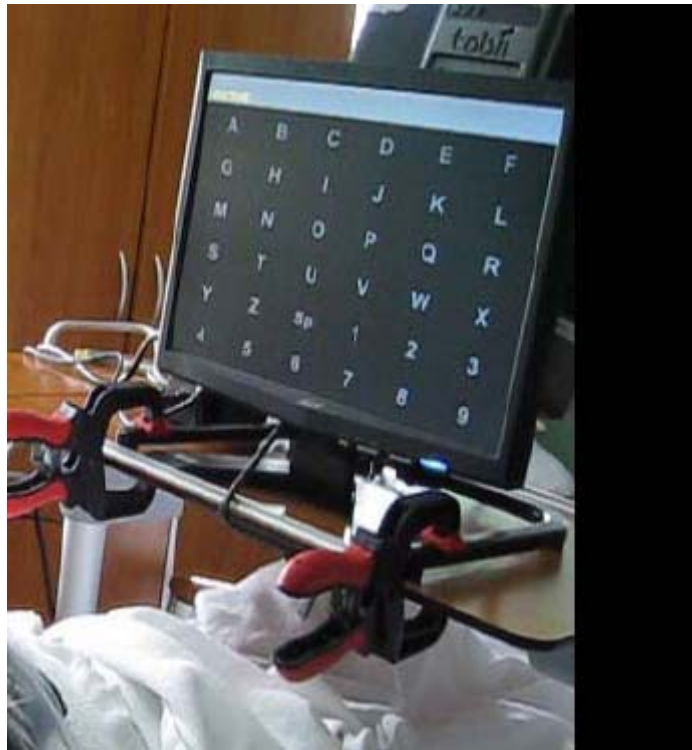
1. Communication

- dysathria: difficulty with speech
- assessment: SALT
- management :
 - telegram speech
 - notepad and pen to
 - speech generating devices: light writers, eye gaze systems

Light writer



Eye gaze/nose pointing system



2. Pain

- Disease itself not painful
- Treatment :
 - Physiotherapy
 - medication
 - muscle relaxants eg baclofen , tizanidine
 - pain killers (WHO ladder)

3. Breathing difficulties

- type of problem
 - poor night time ventilation
 - day time breathlessness
- assessment:
 - OT and physio,
 - referral to specialist centres

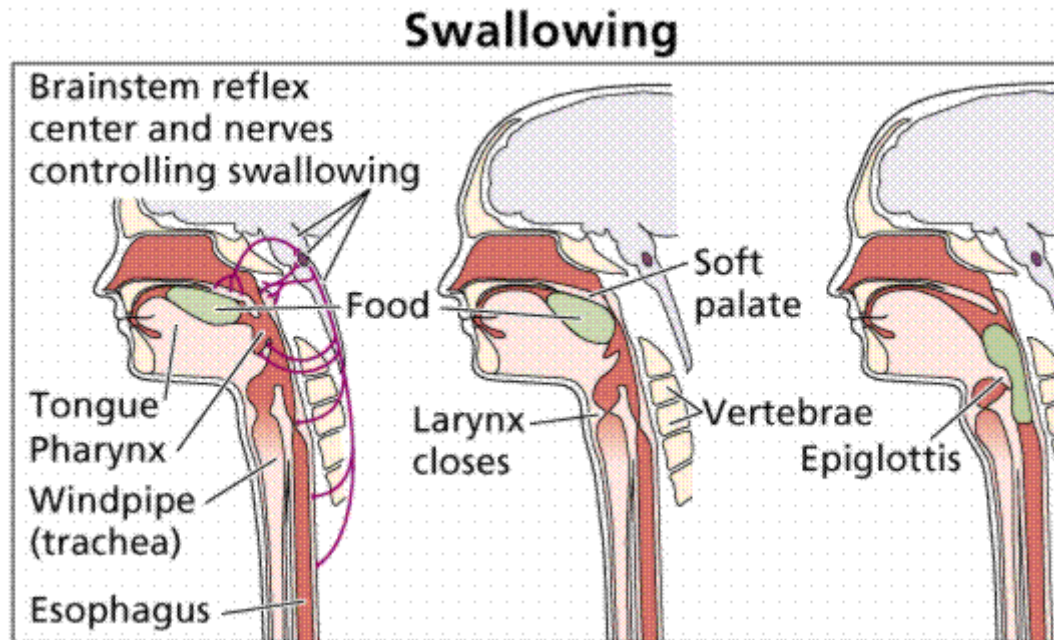
Breathing difficulties

- Treatment:
 - non-drug:
 - explanation
 - positioning and physiotherapy
 - non-invasive ventilation
 - Drugs: opiates and benzodiazepines
 - Breathing Space Kit

4. Swallowing

- Cause
- Assessment: SALT assessment
- Treatment:
 - aids, positioning, calorie rich, softer foods
 - PEG tube insertion for medication and nutrition
 - Saliva: see below

dysphagia





Saliva problems

Treatment:

– watery saliva:

- atropine drops, hyoscine hydrobromide/butyl bromide, glycopyrronium, tricyclics,
- Botulinum toxin injection

– thick stringy mucus;

- Non drug: avoid dehydration, dairy products
- Beta blockers , mucolytics
- Steam inhalation/Suction Pump

Botulinum injection



5. Mood disorder

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Labile mood

6. Continence

- MND does not cause incontinence
- Mobility problems may cause difficulties
- Aids for urinary problems
- Adequate fluid and bulk intake to prevent constipation

7. Sexuality

- Health professional: enable patient to talk about it
- www.outsiders.org.uk

Doing something is easy,
Acknowledging our patients'
concerns without having a solution
is the bigger challenge.

Useful links

- www.mndassociation.org
- www.patient.co.uk
- www.mndscotland.org.uk
- 'Motor neuron disease'
 - Kevin Talbot and Rachel Marsden; The Facts series
OUP
- www.outsiders.org.uk