apparently not justified. The need for early diagnosis and treatment has been emphasized previously (Millichap JG et al. JAMA 1962;182:125).

ANTICONSULSANT TOXICITY

LONG-TERM VALPROATE HEMATOLOGIC SIDE EFFECTS

Hematologic side effects in 60 patients, aged 2-29 years (mean 14 years), receiving valproate (VPA) monotherapy for >4 years in a long-term care facility, are reported from the Department of Pediatrics, East Carolina University School of Medicine, Greenville, North Carolina. Hematologic abnormalities, especially thrombocytopenia, <130,000/mcl (12 patients) and macrocytosis (11), were demonstrated in 20 (33%) patients. With VPA levels >100 mcg/ml in 22 patients, the incidence increased to 55%. Platelet counts were inversely related to VPA levels; thrombocytopenia was corrected when VPA dosage was reduced. Three had anemia, and 3 had leukopenia. Serum B₁₂ levels were increased (>1000 mcg/ml) in 51 (86%); folate levels were normal. Blood smears showed increased numbers of bilobed polymorphonuclear cells (Pelger-Huet-like cells), an anomaly commonly associated with VPA-induced macrocytosis. (May RB, Sunder TR. Hematologic manifestations of long-term valproate therapy. Epilepsia Nov/Dec 1993;34:1098-1101). (Reprints: Dr RB May, Craven County Health Department, PO Drawer 12610, New Bern, NC 28561).

COMMENT. The authors recommend close regular surveillance of patients receiving valproate, with continuous attention to blood counts, especially platelets and mean corpuscular volumes. The early recognition of these relatively frequent blood count anomalies may lead to reduction in VPA dosage or drug withdrawal and avoidance of major hematologic toxicity.

CARBAMAZEPINE, AUDITORY ERPs, AND BCECT

The effects of carbamazepine (CBZ) on cognitive function were evaluated by using measurements of auditory event-related potentials (ERPs) and P300 latencies in 23 patients, aged 7 to 16 years, with benign childhood epilepsy and centrotemporal spikes (BCECT), at the Department of Pediatrics, Toyama Medical and Pharmaceutical University, Toyama, Japan. As the epilepsy was controlled at the initiation of therapy, and with increasing age, the P300 latency was at first shortened. During the course of therapy with CBZ, P300 latency was prolonged, and the age-corrected P300 latency showed a significant correlation with the serum CBZ level. The dose of CBZ ranged from 10-23 mg/kg/day (mean 15.8). The latency became shorter when CBZ was discontinued. (Naganuma Y et al. Auditory event-related potentials in benign childhood epilepsy with centrotemporal spike: The effects of carbamazepine. Clin Electroencephalogr Jan 1994;25:8-12). (Reprints: Yoshihiro Naganuma MD, Department of Pediatrics, Toyama Medical and Pharmaceutical University, 2630 Sugitani, Toyama 930-01, Japan).

COMMENT. The major positive component of auditory event-related potentials, at a latency of 300 msec (P300) for rare tones (2000 Hz), has been correlated with cognitive function. Abnormalities in ERPs in patients with epilepsy, and particularly prolongation of P300 latency, have been ascribed to the effects of the seizures and to antiepileptic drug therapy. Various epileptic syndromes have shown different