Deafness and myopia syndrome

Deafness and myopia syndrome is a disorder that causes problems with both hearing and vision. People with this disorder have moderate to profound hearing loss in both ears that may worsen over time. The hearing loss may be described as sensorineural, meaning that it is related to changes in the inner ear, or it may be caused by auditory neuropathy, which is a problem with the transmission of sound (auditory) signals from the inner ear to the brain. The hearing loss is either present at birth (congenital) or begins in infancy, before the child learns to speak (prelingual).

Affected individuals also have severe nearsightedness (high myopia). These individuals are able to see nearby objects clearly, but objects that are farther away appear blurry. The myopia is usually diagnosed by early childhood.

Frequency

The prevalence of deafness and myopia syndrome is unknown. Only a few affected families have been described in the medical literature.

Causes

Deafness and myopia syndrome is caused by mutations in the SLITRK6 gene. The protein produced from this gene is found primarily in the inner ear and the eye. This protein promotes growth and survival of nerve cells (neurons) in the inner ear that transmit auditory signals. It also controls (regulates) the growth of the eye after birth. In particular, the SLITRK6 protein influences the length of the eyeball (axial length), which affects whether a person will be nearsighted or farsighted, or will have normal vision. The SLITRK6 protein spans the cell membrane, where it is anchored in the proper position to perform its function.

SLITRK6 gene mutations that cause deafness and myopia syndrome result in an abnormally short SLITRK6 protein that is not anchored properly to the cell membrane. As a result, the protein is unable to function normally. Impaired SLITRK6 protein function leads to abnormal nerve development in the inner ear and improperly controlled eyeball growth, resulting in the hearing loss and nearsightedness that occur in deafness and myopia syndrome.

Inheritance Pattern

This condition is inherited in an autosomal recessive pattern, which means both copies of the gene in each cell have mutations. The parents of an individual with an autosomal recessive condition each carry one copy of the mutated gene, but they typically do not show signs and symptoms of the condition.
Other Names for This Condition

- deafness and myopia
- deafness, cochlear, plus
- DFNMP
- high myopia and sensorineural deafness
- high myopia-sensorineural deafness syndrome
- myopia and deafness

Diagnosis & Management

Genetic Testing Information

- What is genetic testing?
  /primer/testing/genetictesting
- Genetic Testing Registry: Deafness and myopia

Other Diagnosis and Management Resources

- Baby's First Test: Hearing Loss
  https://www.babysfirsttest.org/newborn-screening/conditions/hearing-loss
- EyeSmart: Eyeglasses for Vision Correction
  https://www.aao.org/eye-health/glasses-contacts/glasses
- GeneReview: Deafness and Myopia Syndrome
  https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK269029
- Harvard Medical School Center for Hereditary Deafness
  https://hearing.harvard.edu/
- KidsHealth: Hearing Evaluation in Children
  https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/hear.html
- MedlinePlus Encyclopedia: Cochlear Implant
  https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007203.htm
- MedlinePlus Health Topic: Cochlear Implants
  https://medlineplus.gov/cochlearimplants.html
- MedlinePlus Health Topic: Hearing Aids
  https://medlineplus.gov/hearingaids.html
- MedlinePlus Health Topic: Newborn Screening
  https://medlineplus.gov/newbornscreening.html
Additional Information & Resources

Health Information from MedlinePlus

• Encyclopedia: Cochlear Implant
  https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007203.htm

• Health Topic: Cochlear Implants
  https://medlineplus.gov/cochlearimplants.html

• Health Topic: Hearing Aids
  https://medlineplus.gov/hearingaids.html

• Health Topic: Hearing Problems in Children
  https://medlineplus.gov/hearingproblemsinchildren.html

• Health Topic: Newborn Screening
  https://medlineplus.gov/newbornscreening.html

• Health Topic: Refractive Errors
  https://medlineplus.gov/refractiveerrors.html

Genetic and Rare Diseases Information Center

• Deafness and myopia syndrome

Additional NIH Resources

• National Eye Institute (NEI): Refractive Errors

• National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD): Auditory Neuropathy
  https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/auditory-neuropathy

Educational Resources

• Center for Hearing and Speech: Types of Hearing Loss
  https://www.centerhearingandspeech.org/types-hearing-loss/

• Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Hearing Loss in Children -- Types of Hearing Loss
  https://www.cdc.gov/NCBDDD/hearingloss/types.html

• KidsHealth: Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum Disorder

• KidsHealth: Your Child's Vision

• Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center
  https://www3.gallaudet.edu/clerc-center.html
• MalaCards: deafness and myopia
  https://www.malacards.org/card/deafness_and_myopia

• My Baby’s Hearing: Auditory Neuropathy
  https://www.babyhearing.org/auditory-neuropathy-spectrum-disorder

• Orphanet: High myopia-sensorineural deafness syndrome
  https://www.orpha.net/consor/cgi-bin/OC_Exp.php?Lng=EN&Expert=363396

• University of Arizona Health Sciences: Myopia and Deafness
  https://disorders.eyes.arizona.edu/disorders/myopia-and-deafness

Patient Support and Advocacy Resources

• Alexander Graham Bell Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
  https://www.agbell.org/Default.aspx

• March of Dimes: Hearing Loss

• Medical Home Portal: Hearing Loss and Deafness
  https://www.medicalhomeportal.org/diagnoses-and-conditions/hearing-loss-and-deafness

• National Association of the Deaf
  https://www.nad.org/

• Royal National Institute of Blind People: Myopia and High Degree Myopia
  https://www.rnib.org.uk/eye-health/eye-conditions/myopia-and-pathological-myopia

• University of Kansas Genetics Education Center Resource List: Hard of Hearing/Deafness
  http://www.kumc.edu/gec/support/hearing.html

Clinical Information from GeneReviews

• Deafness and Myopia Syndrome
  https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK269029

Scientific Articles on PubMed

• PubMed
  https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed?term=%28deafness+and+myopia+syndrome%29+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+human%5Bmh%5D+AND+%22last+3600+days%22%5Bdp%5D

Catalog of Genes and Diseases from OMIM

• DEAFNESS AND MYOPIA
  http://omim.org/entry/221200
Medical Genetics Database from MedGen

- Deafness and myopia syndrome

Sources for This Summary


Reprinted from Genetics Home Reference:

Reviewed: November 2015
Published: December 10, 2019

Lister Hill National Center for Biomedical Communications
U.S. National Library of Medicine
National Institutes of Health
Department of Health & Human Services