Hereditary sensory neuropathy type IA

Hereditary sensory neuropathy type IA is a condition characterized by nerve abnormalities in the legs and feet (peripheral neuropathy). Many people with this condition experience prickling or tingling sensations (paresthesias), numbness, and a reduced ability to feel pain and sense hot and cold. Some affected individuals do not lose sensation, but instead feel shooting pains in their legs and feet. As the disorder progresses, the sensory abnormalities can affect the hands, arms, shoulders, joints, and abdomen. Affected individuals may also experience muscle wasting and weakness as they get older. Weakness in the ankle muscles can make walking difficult. As the condition progresses, some people with hereditary sensory neuropathy type IA require wheelchair assistance.

Individuals with hereditary sensory neuropathy type IA typically get open sores (ulcers) on their feet or hands or infections of the soft tissue of the fingertips (whitlows) that are slow to heal. Because affected individuals cannot feel the pain of these sores, they may not seek immediate treatment. Without treatment, the ulcers can become infected and may require amputation of the surrounding area or limb.

Some people with hereditary sensory neuropathy type IA develop hearing loss caused by abnormalities of the inner ear (sensorineural hearing loss). Hearing loss typically develops in middle to late adulthood.

The signs and symptoms of hereditary sensory neuropathy type IA can begin anytime between adolescence and late adulthood. While the features of this condition tend to worsen over time, affected individuals have a normal life expectancy if signs and symptoms are properly treated.

Frequency
Hereditary sensory neuropathy type IA is a rare condition; its prevalence is estimated to be 1 to 2 per 100,000 individuals.

Causes
Mutations in the SPTLC1 gene cause hereditary sensory neuropathy type IA. The SPTLC1 gene provides instructions for making one part (subunit) of an enzyme called serine palmitoyltransferase (SPT). The SPT enzyme is involved in making certain fats called sphingolipids. Sphingolipids are important components of cell membranes and play a role in many cell functions.

SPTLC1 gene mutations reduce the amount of functional SPTLC1 subunit that is produced, which results in an SPT enzyme with altered activity. This altered enzyme makes molecules called deoxysphingoid bases, which it does not normally produce.
Because of this new function, the SPT enzyme's production of sphingolipid is reduced. Overall, there does not seem to be a decrease in sphingolipid production because the body is able to compensate for the SPT enzyme's reduced production. When accumulated, deoxysphingoid bases are toxic to neurons. The gradual destruction of nerve cells caused by the buildup of these toxic molecules results in loss of sensation and muscle weakness in people with hereditary sensory neuropathy type IA. Although the SPT enzyme does not produce a normal amount of sphingolipids, the body is able to compensate, and there does not seem to be an overall reduction of these fats in the body.

Inheritance Pattern

This condition is inherited in an autosomal dominant pattern, which means one copy of the altered gene in each cell is sufficient to cause the disorder.

Other Names for This Condition

- autosomal dominant hereditary sensory radicular neuropathy, type 1A
- hereditary sensory and autonomic neuropathy, type IA
- HSAN IA
- HSAN1A
- HSN IA
- HSN1A

Diagnosis & Management

Genetic Testing Information

- What is genetic testing?
  /primer/testing/genetictesting
- Genetic Testing Registry: Neuropathy hereditary sensory and autonomic type 1

Research Studies from ClinicalTrials.gov

- ClinicalTrials.gov
  https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/results?cond=%22hereditary+sensory+neuropathy+type+1A%22+OR+%22hereditary+sensory+and+autonomic+neuropathy%2C+type+1A%22+OR+%22hereditary+sensory+neuropathy+type+1%22
Other Diagnosis and Management Resources

- GeneReview: SPTLC1-Related Hereditary Sensory Neuropathy
  https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK1390
- Rare Diseases Clinical Research Network: Inherited Neuropathies Consortium
  https://www.rarediseasesnetwork.org/cms/INC
- The Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy: Symptoms
  https://www.foundationforpn.org/what-is-peripheral-neuropathy/symptoms/

Additional Information & Resources

Health Information from MedlinePlus

- Health Topic: Peripheral Nerve Disorders
  https://medlineplus.gov/peripheralnervedisorders.html

Genetic and Rare Diseases Information Center

- Hereditary sensory neuropathy type 1
  https://rarediseases.info.nih.gov/diseases/6635/hereditary-sensory-neuropathy-type-1

Additional NIH Resources

- National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke: Peripheral Neuropathy Fact Sheet
  https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/All-Disorders/Peripheral-Neuropathy-Information-Page

Educational Resources

- Boston Children’s Hospital: Nervous System Disorders
  http://www.childrenshospital.org/conditions-and-treatments/conditions/n/nervous-system-disorders
- JAMA Patient Page: Peripheral Neuropathy
  https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/185714
- MalaCards: sensory neuropathy type 1
  https://www.malacards.org/card/sensory_neuropathy_type_1
- Orphanet: Hereditary sensory and autonomic neuropathy type 1
  https://www.orpha.net/consor/cgi-bin/OC_Exp.php?Lng=EN&Expert=36386
- Washington University, St. Louis: Neuromuscular Disease Center
  https://neuromuscular.wustl.edu/sensory-small.html#hsan1
Patient Support and Advocacy Resources

- National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD)  
  https://rarediseases.org/rare-diseases/hereditary-sensory-neuropathy-type-i/
- The Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy  
  https://www.foundationforpn.org/

Clinical Information from GeneReviews

- SPTLC1-Related Hereditary Sensory Neuropathy  
  https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK1390

Scientific Articles on PubMed

- PubMed  
  https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed?term=%28%28hereditary+sensory+neuropathy%5BALL%5D%29+AND+%28SPTLC1%5BALL%5D%29%29+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+human%5Bmh%5D+AND+%22last+3600+days+%22%5Bdp%5D

Catalog of Genes and Diseases from OMIM

- NEUROPATHY, HEREDITARY SENSORY AND AUTONOMIC, TYPE IA  
  http://omim.org/entry/162400

Sources for This Summary

  Citation on PubMed: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11242106
  Citation on PubMed: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11242114
  Citation on PubMed: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16364956
*Citation on PubMed:* https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20097765
*Free article on PubMed Central:* https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2856995/

*Citation on PubMed:* https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21618344

Reprinted from Genetics Home Reference:

Reviewed: March 2015
Published: January 21, 2020

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