Neurofibromatosis type 2

Neurofibromatosis type 2 is a disorder characterized by the growth of noncancerous tumors in the nervous system. The most common tumors associated with neurofibromatosis type 2 are called vestibular schwannomas or acoustic neuromas. These growths develop along the nerve that carries information from the inner ear to the brain (the auditory nerve). Tumors that occur on other nerves are also commonly found with this condition.

The signs and symptoms of neurofibromatosis type 2 usually appear during adolescence or in a person's early twenties, although they can begin at any age. The most frequent early symptoms of vestibular schwannomas are hearing loss, ringing in the ears (tinnitus), and problems with balance. In most cases, these tumors occur in both ears by age 30. If tumors develop elsewhere in the nervous system, signs and symptoms vary according to their location. Complications of tumor growth can include changes in vision, numbness or weakness in the arms or legs, and fluid buildup in the brain. Some people with neurofibromatosis type 2 also develop clouding of the lens (cataracts) in one or both eyes, often beginning in childhood.

Frequency

Neurofibromatosis type 2 has an estimated incidence of 1 in 33,000 people worldwide.

Causes

Mutations in the *NF2* gene cause neurofibromatosis type 2. The *NF2* gene provides instructions for making a protein called merlin (also known as schwannomin). This protein is produced in the nervous system, particularly in Schwann cells, which surround and insulate nerve cells (neurons) in the brain and spinal cord. Merlin acts as a tumor suppressor, which means that it keeps cells from growing and dividing too rapidly or in an uncontrolled way. Although its exact function is unknown, this protein is likely also involved in controlling cell movement, cell shape, and communication between cells. Mutations in the *NF2* gene lead to the production of a nonfunctional version of the merlin protein that cannot regulate the growth and division of cells. Research suggests that the loss of merlin allows cells, especially Schwann cells, to multiply too frequently and form the tumors characteristic of neurofibromatosis type 2.

Inheritance Pattern

Neurofibromatosis type 2 is considered to have an autosomal dominant pattern of inheritance. People with this condition are born with one mutated copy of the *NF2* gene in each cell. In about half of cases, the altered gene is inherited from an affected parent.
The remaining cases result from new mutations in the NF2 gene and occur in people with no history of the disorder in their family.

Unlike most other autosomal dominant conditions, in which one altered copy of a gene in each cell is sufficient to cause the disorder, two copies of the NF2 gene must be altered to trigger tumor formation in neurofibromatosis type 2. A mutation in the second copy of the NF2 gene occurs in Schwann cells or other cells in the nervous system during a person's lifetime. Almost everyone who is born with one NF2 mutation acquires a second mutation (known as a somatic mutation) in these cells and develops the tumors characteristic of neurofibromatosis type 2.

Other Names for This Condition

- BANF
- bilateral acoustic neurofibromatosis
- central neurofibromatosis
- familial acoustic neuromas
- neurofibromatosis 2
- neurofibromatosis type II
- NF2
- schwannoma, acoustic, bilateral

Diagnosis & Management

Genetic Testing Information

- What is genetic testing? /primer/testing/genetictesting

Research Studies from ClinicalTrials.gov

- ClinicalTrials.gov https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/results?cond=%22neurofibromatosis+type+2%22+OR+%22neurofibromatosis%22

Other Diagnosis and Management Resources

- Boston Children's Hospital http://d2dnwn11jzzacv.cloudfront.net/WebsiteDown/websitedown.html
Additional Information & Resources

Health Information from MedlinePlus
- Encyclopedia: Acoustic Neuroma
  https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000778.htm
- Encyclopedia: Neurofibromatosis 2
  https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000795.htm
- Health Topic: Acoustic Neuroma
  https://medlineplus.gov/acousticneuroma.html
- Health Topic: Neurofibromatosis
  https://medlineplus.gov/neurofibromatosis.html

Genetic and Rare Diseases Information Center
- Neurofibromatosis type 2

Additional NIH Resources
- National Human Genome Research Institute
  https://www.genome.gov/Genetic-Disorders/Neurofibromatosis
- National Institute of Neurologic Disorders and Stroke
  https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/All-Disorders/Neurofibromatosis-Information-Page

Educational Resources
- Centre for Genetics Education (Australia)
- JAMA Patient Page
  https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/184901
- KidsHealth from the Nemours Foundation
- MalaCards: neurofibromatosis, type ii
  https://www.malacards.org/card/neurofibromatosis_type_ii
• Merck Manual Consumer Version

• Orphanet: Neurofibromatosis type 2
  https://www.orpha.net/consor/cgi-bin/OC_Exp.php?Lng=EN&Expert=637

• Your Genes Your Health from Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory: Neurofibromatosis
  http://www.ygyh.org/nf/whatisit.htm

Patient Support and Advocacy Resources
• Acoustic Neuroma Association
  https://www.anausa.org/

• Children's Tumor Foundation
  https://www.ctf.org/

• National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD)
  https://rarediseases.org/rare-diseases/neurofibromatosis-2/

• Neurofibromatosis Network
  https://www.nfnetwork.org/

• Resource List from the University of Kansas Medical Center
  http://www.kumc.edu/gec/support/neurofib.html

Clinical Information from GeneReviews
• Neurofibromatosis 2
  https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK1201

Scientific Articles on PubMed
• PubMed
  https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed?term=%28Neurofibromatosis+2%5BMAJR%5D%29+AND+%28%28neurofibromatosis%5BTI%5D%29+AND+%282+OR+II%5BTI%5D%29%29+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+human%5Bmh%5D+AND+%22last+720+days%22+AND+dp%5D

Catalog of Genes and Diseases from OMIM
• NEUROFIBROMATOSIS, TYPE II
  http://omim.org/entry/101000

Medical Genetics Database from MedGen
• Neurofibromatosis, type 2
Sources for This Summary

  Citation on PubMed: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19476995 
  Free article on PubMed Central: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4748851/

  Citation on PubMed: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20082463

  Citation on PubMed: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20301380

  Citation on PubMed: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19545378 
  Free article on PubMed Central: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2708144/

  Citation on PubMed: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21358190

  Citation on PubMed: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22483819

  Citation on PubMed: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15776319


Reviewed: December 2013 
Published: May 14, 2019

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