WALK WITH WAPO THIS OCTOBER FOR PITUITARY AWARENESS MONTH AND LEARN ABOUT



ADRENAL INSUFFICIENCY



Adrenal insufficiency (AI) is an endocrine disease where there is a lack of cortisol production from the adrenal glands. This can be caused

by adrenal failure (primary

AI), diseases affecting the

pituitary gland (secondary

AI) or problems with the

hypothalamic-pituitary

prolonged use of

adrenal (HPA) axis due to

glucocorticoids (tertiary AI).

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SYMPTOMS INCLUDE

- Headaches
- Nausea or vomiting
- Dizziness that may lead to fainting
- Abdominal pain and diarrhea
- Craving for salty foods
- Joint or muscle pain and weakness
- Chronic fatigue
- Loss of appetite leading to weight loss
- Irritability, confusion or depression
- Irregular or absent menstrual periods
- Low libido



"To be diagnosed with a rare disease for life is frightening." 02

DIAGNOSIS IS BASED ON

- Presence of symptoms
- Fasting morning cortisol
- Dynamic testing such as cosyntropin stimulation test
- Pituitary MRI (in case of secondary AI), adrenal imaging in select cases

"The hospital should provide

emergency injection training

for patients."



MANAGEMENT AND TREATMENT

- Hormone replacement therapy
- "Stress" dose of hydrocortisone in case of extreme stress. sickness or injury
- Emergency hydrocortisone injection for an adrenal crisis



"Too many physicians state 'it is all over when you take your steroids' and that is not true."

> "Patients need to remember to take along their emergency kit when traveling."

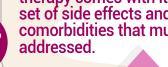
"I take medication and it

affects my daily life. I have many side effects."



LONG-TERM CHALLENGES

- Patients suffer from invisible disabilities such as chronic fatique which can have a major impact on their daily life.
- Acute illness, without appropriate stress dosing, can lead to an adrenal crisis (emergency situation)! Patients
 must always carry an emergency
- hydrocortisone injection kit.
 Early diagnosis by healthcare professionals is crucial in order to avoid a life-threatening adrenal crisis.
 It is a chronic disease and long-term glucocorticoid replacement
- therapy comes with its own set of side effects and comorbidities that must be addressed.



"The endocrine nurse was a great help when supporting my family with the emergency crisis injection."





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