Backpack Paralysis 3

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- Abstract -

Backpack Paralysis - A Report of 3 Cases -

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Upper extremity numbness, weakness and atrophy associated with the use of a heavy backpack have been reported in military personnel and termed pack palsy. The following characteristics should lead one to suspect this diagnosis. A previously well individual who has used a pack for hours first complains of pain or sensory symptoms in the shoulder or arm. The pain is frequently followed by gradual weakness and atrophy mainly in the shoulder girdle. Physical examination will reveal decreased strength in the deltoid, supraspinatous, infraspinatous and, occasionally, in the wrist extensors. Sensory loss may be present but is less common than the motor weakness. Compression of the upper trunk of the brachial plexus or peripheral nerve supply to the shoulder girdle by backpack straps is implicated as the causative mechanism. But many mechanisms and electrodiagnostic findings are proposed.

We report 3 cases of backpack paralysis with history, physical examination and electrodiagnostic study.

Key Words: Backpack paralysis, Brachial plexus injury

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Table 1. Findings of Nerve Conduction Study of 3 Cases

	Case 1		Cas	e 2	Case 3		
Motor Nerve	Amplitude (mV) Right/Left	Latency (msec) Right/Left	Amplitude (mV) Right/Left	Latency (msec) Right/Left	Amplitude (mV) Right/Left	Latency (msec) Right/Left	
Median	16.9/16.7	3.0/2.6	13.6/9.8	3.2/3.5	11.1/6.4	3.5/3.3	
Ulnar	11.2/11.0	3.2/2.8	12.1/11.8	2.9/2.8	9.9/14.5	3.0/3.0	
Radial	5.6/5.3	1.8/1.8	2.3/1.8	1.3/0.8			
Axillary	11.2/10.3	3.0/3.5	5.2/2.3	3.5/3.3	5.2/NR	4.0/NR	
Musculocutaneous	11.9/10.4	4.1/4.2	4.0/5.8	4.5/4.6			
Suprascapular			2.6/2.7	2.5/2.7			
Long thoracic					5.5/5.0	3.9/3.9	
Sensory Nerve	Amplitude (µV)	Latency (msec)	Amplitude (µV)	Latency (msec)	Amplitude (µV)	Latency (msec)	

Amplitude (µV) Right/Left	Latency (msec) Right/Left	Amplitude (µV) Right/Left	Latency (msec) Right/Left	Amplitude (µV) Right/Left	Latency (msec) Right/Left
52.9/58.9	2.2/2.3	41.3/59.8	2.6/2.9	19.8/25.8	2.6/2.6
30.5/30.7	2.1/2.0	39.8/42.8	2.4/2.5	15.2/17.2	2.6/2.8
58.3/62.5	1.3/1.3	59.8/29.7	1.5/1.8	34.5/41.6	1.9/2.0
		14.4/NR	2.0/NR		
		NR/28.5	NR/28.5	16.8/NR	1.1/NR
	Right/Left 52.9/58.9 30.5/30.7	Right/Left Right/Left 52.9/58.9 2.2/2.3 30.5/30.7 2.1/2.0	Right/Left Right/Left Right/Left 52.9/58.9 2.2/2.3 41.3/59.8 30.5/30.7 2.1/2.0 39.8/42.8 58.3/62.5 1.3/1.3 59.8/29.7 14.4/NR	Right/Left Right/Left Right/Left Right/Left 52.9/58.9 2.2/2.3 41.3/59.8 2.6/2.9 30.5/30.7 2.1/2.0 39.8/42.8 2.4/2.5 58.3/62.5 1.3/1.3 59.8/29.7 1.5/1.8 14.4/NR 2.0/NR	Right/Left Right/Left Right/Left Right/Left Right/Left 52.9/58.9 2.2/2.3 41.3/59.8 2.6/2.9 19.8/25.8 30.5/30.7 2.1/2.0 39.8/42.8 2.4/2.5 15.2/17.2 58.3/62.5 1.3/1.3 59.8/29.7 1.5/1.8 34.5/41.6 14.4/NR 2.0/NR

MAC: Medial antecubital cutaneous; LAC: Lateral antecubital cutaneous; NR: No response

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Table 2. Initial Needle EMG Study and Follow up Study of Case 1

		Initial Study				Follow up Study				
Muscles	Insertional Activity	Spontaneous Activity		MUAP		Spontaneous Activity		MUAP		
		PSWs	Fibs	Phasicity	Rec.	PSWs	Fibs	Phasicity	Rec.	
Lt. Extensor carpi radialis		О	О	N/P	R	++	0	N	R/C	
Lt. Biceps brachii		0	0	N	C	0	o	N	R/C	
Lt. Extensor indicis profundus	Increased	+	+	P	R/S	++	О	N	R/C	
Lt. Serratus anterior	Increased	О	0	N/P	R	+++	+++		0	
Lt. Triceps brachii	Increased	O	0	N	R/S	+	О	N	R/C	
Lt. Flexor carpi ulnaris	Increased	O	0	N	C	0	O	N	R/C	
Lt. Flexor carpi radialis		0	0	N	C					
Lt. First dorsal interosseous		0	0	N	R	0	o	N	C	
Lt. Supraspinatus		0	0	N	R/S					
Lt. Infraspinatus		0	0	N	R					
Lt. Pronator teres		O	0	N	C	0	o	N	C	
Lt. Deltoid		0	0	N	C	0	o	N	R/C	
Lt. Latissimus dorsi		0	0	N	C					
Lt. C7 paraspinal muscle		O	0							
Lt. C8 paraspinal muscle		O	О							

PSWs: Positive sharp waves; Fibs: Fibrillations; MUAP: Motor unit action potential; Rec.: Recruitment; N: Normal; P: Polyphasic; R: Reduced; C: Complete; S: Single; Lt: Left

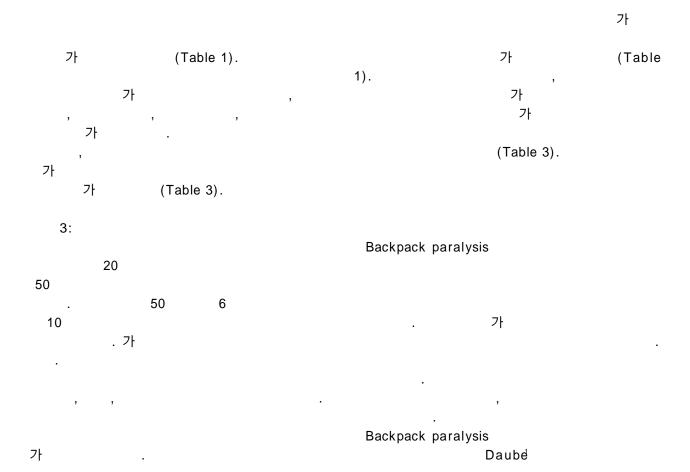
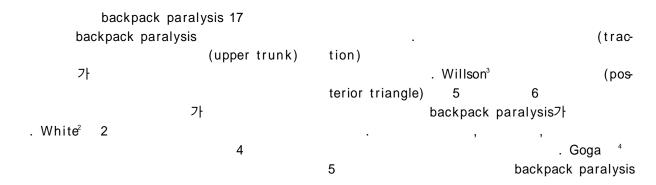


Table 3. Needle EMG Studies of Case 2 and Case 3

		Ca	ise 2	Case 3				
Muscles	Spontaneous Activity		MUAP		Spontaneous Activity		MUAP	
	PSWs	Fibs	Phasicity	Rec.	PSWs	Fibs	Phasicity	Rec.
Lt. Biceps brachii	++	++	N/P	R	0	0	N	R/C
Lt. Pronator teres	++	++	N	R/C				
Lt. Deltoid	+++	0	N/P	R/S	+++	+++	P	S
Lt. Extensor carpi radialis	++	0	N/P	R/S	++	++	N/P	R
Lt. Flexor carpi radialis	++	0	N	R/C	0	O	N	C
Lt. Flexor carpi ulnaris	++	0	N	R/C	0	O	N	C
Lt. Pectoralis major	++	0	N	0	0	N	C	
Lt. Triceps brachii	0	0	N	R/C	0	O	N/P	R
Lt. Extensor indicis profundus	+	+	N	R/C	0	0	N	C
Lt. First dorsal interosseous	0	0	N	R/C	0	0	N	R
Lt. Serratus anterior	0	0	N	C	0	+	N	R/C
Lt. Abductor pollicis brevis	0	0	N	C	0	0	N	C
Lt. Infraspinatus	0	0	N	R/C	0	+	N	R/C
Lt. Supraspinatus	О	О	N	R/C				
Lt. Rhomboid					0	0	N	R/C
Rt. Infraspinatus	0	0	N	R/C	0	O	N	C
Rt. Biceps brachii	++	++	P	R				
Rt. Flexor carpi radialis	+++	0	P	R				
Rt. Flexor carpi ulnaris	+	0	N	R/C				
Rt. Pronator teres	++	++	N	R/C				
Rt. Triceps brachii	0	O	N	R/C				
Rt. Extensor carpi radialis	0	0	N	R/C				
Rt. Deltoid	0	O	N	R/C	0	0	N	C
Rt. Pectoralis major	0	0	N	R/C				
Rt. Extensor indicis profundus	0	0	N	R/C				
Rt. Supraspinatus	0	0	N	C				
Rt. First dorsal interosseous	0	0	N	R/C	0	0	N	R/C
Rt. Abductor pollicis brevis	0	0	N	R/C				
Rt. C7 paraspinal muscle	0	0						

PSWs: Positive sharp waves; Fibs: Fibrillations; MUAP: Motor unit action potential; Rec.: Recruitment; N: Normal; P: Polyphasic; R: Reduced; C: Complete; S: Single; Lt: Left; Rt: Right



(posterior cord) Backpack paralysis backpack paralysis Backpack paralysis backpack paralysis Daubé Rothner backpack paralysis backpack paralysis ALICE pack . Bessen ALICE backpack paralysis pack Goga ALICE pack backpack . Bessen paralysis backpack paralysis (branch) (cord) 1. Daube J: Rucksack paralysis. JAMA 1969: 208: 2447-2452 2. White HH: Pack Palsy: A Neurological Complication of (compression) Scouting. Pediatrics 1968: 41: 1001-1003 3. Wilson WJ: Brachial plexus palsy in basic trainees. Mil backpack paralysis Med 1987: 152: 519-522 가 4. Goga IE, Bhigjee AI: Brachial plexus lesions in soldiers-the 'sandbag palsy'. A report of 5 cases. S Afr Med J Backpack paralysis 가 1990: 77(12): 643-4 5. Rothner AD, Wilbourn A, Mercer RD: Rucksack palsy. Pediatrics 1975: 56: 822-824 6. Bessen RJ, Belcher VW, Franklin RJ: Rucksack paralysis Daube) backpack paralysis with and without rucksack frames. Mil Med 1987: 152(7): 372-5 7. Trojaborg W: Electrophysiological findings in pressure Backpack paralysis palsy of the brachial plexus. J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry 1977: 40(12): 1160-7 Trojaborg 3