



Pathology & Biology Section – 2004

G83 Lucid Interval Revisited: Delayed Onset of Unconsciousness in an Impacted Child

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand the timing of inflicted childhood head trauma, depending on the mechanisms, and clarification and definition of the term "lucid interval."

The impact of the mechanisms of injury, interplay of the primary and secondary cerebral injury and age of the injured child on the timing of injuries.

The timing of injuries and existence of a lucid interval in non-accidental head trauma are among the most controversial issues in child abuse investigation. These issues are of paramount importance when it comes to prosecuting certain individuals who cared for the child. The current, widely held belief is that if the injured child becomes unresponsive while cared for by a certain individual then that particular caretaker must invariably be the perpetrator. This tenet, although recently challenged, is still being equally applied to impacted and "shaken baby" cases. In the present case report we discuss and correlate investigative information and court testimonies with autopsy findings in an impacted five-week-old infant. Our emphasis is on the importance of distinguishing different mechanisms of injury as well as the significance of primary and secondary cerebral injury, which have considerable impact on the clinical presentation and pathological findings in child abuse cases.

Non-Accidental Head Trauma, Craniocerebral Injuries, Subdural Hemorrhage