



### **Hashimoto's Encephalitis**

Hashimoto's is a rare, probably autoimmune, encephalitis/encephalopathy usually associated with high levels of thyroid antibodies in the blood. The exact cause is unknown - the thyroid abs are a marker rather than the cause of the problem. Thyroid function is usually normal.

Often there is a global depression of higher function - drowsiness and sometimes coma. Other features can include amnesia and epileptic seizures.

It is a diagnosis of exclusion and the differential is wide - from CJD to rare inborn errors of metabolism. Useful tests include MRI brain, EEG, CSF findings, endocrine and metabolic screens, and viral studies.

Most patients respond to high dose prednisolone, although improvement may take weeks, even months. Plasma exchange and IVIg have been used in some patients.

The prognosis with treatment is generally good. Steroids are often continued for many months.

A useful reference is

Shaw PJ. Walls TJ. Newman PK. Cleland PG. Cartlidge NE. Hashimoto's encephalopathy: a steroid-responsive disorder associated with high anti-thyroid antibody titers--report of 5 cases. *Neurology*. 41:228-33, 1991

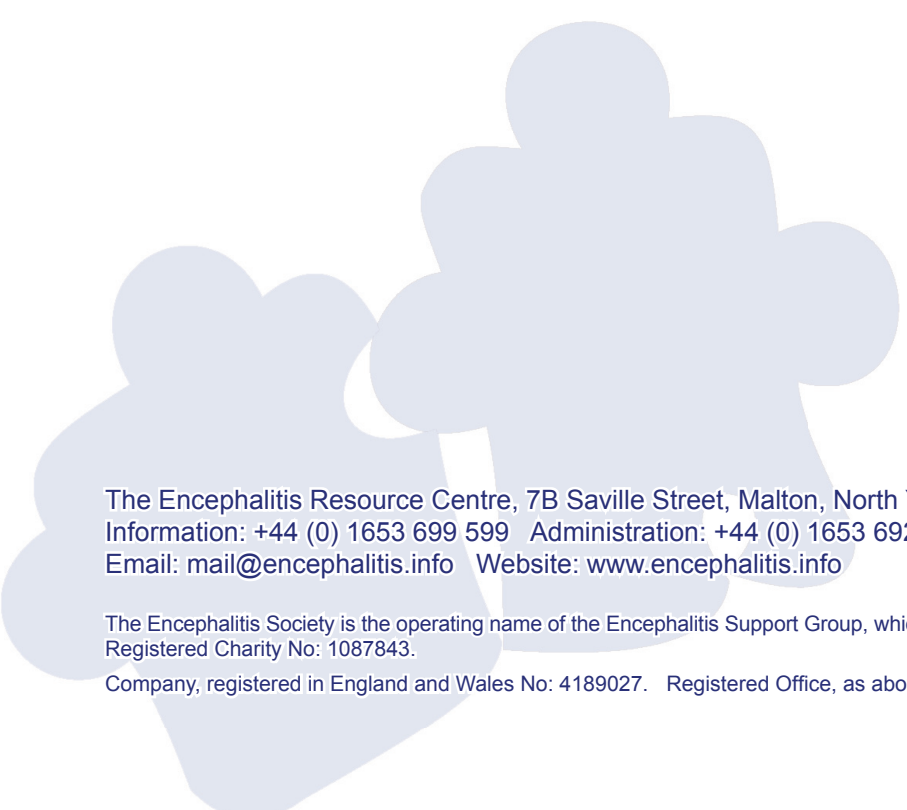
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