

PRES-induced blindness: a reversible vision crisis

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ABSTRACT

Posterior reversible encephalopathy syndrome (PRES) is a rare neurological disorder characterized by headache, altered mental status, seizures, and visual disturbances. We report a case of PRES with transient cortical blindness in a primigravida patient. A 33-year-old primigravida, unaware of her pregnancy, presented with sudden onset of vision loss, severe headache, seizures, and altered mental status over 2 days. On arrival, she was unresponsive with a blood pressure of 234/150 mmHg. Physical examination revealed a palpable uterus at 34 weeks, later confirmed by ultrasound to be 35 weeks with a viable foetus. The patient was intubated for airway protection. Cerebral computed tomography showed bilateral occipital white matter hypodensities consistent with PRES. She was treated for eclampsia and underwent emergency caesarean section, delivering a healthy infant. On post-extubation day one post-delivery, she reported bilateral blurry vision with visual acuity limited to counting fingers. No relative afferent pupillary defect was noted. Fundoscopy revealed flame-shaped haemorrhages, multiple cotton wool spots, and a dull foveal reflex. One week later, her vision improved to 6/9 bilaterally with normal ocular findings. Humphrey visual field testing showed residual left homonymous quadrantanopia after two weeks. This case underscores the critical importance of early recognition and treatment of PRES in pregnant patients. Timely intervention can lead to significant recovery of visual function and overall prognosis.