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Title: Cerebral imaging of decompression injury patients with 18-F-2-fluoro-2-deoxyglucose positron emission tomography

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Abstract: The objective assessment of the extent of cerebral insult and the effects of therapy in decompression injury patients has proven to be difficult by most imaging modalities. In this pilot study we evaluated the ability of 18-F-2-fluoro-2-deoxyglucose (FDG) positron emission tomography (PET) to identify metabolic brain abnormalities in decompression injury patients. Twenty-two patients who were evaluated at our institution for decompression accidents were evaluated with FDG-PET. Four of the 22 patients had no neurologic symptoms and no neurologic findings on clinical exam at the time of the FDG-PET study. No statistically significant correlations were found between the presence of symptoms and the demonstration of abnormalities on the PET study and no statistically significant correlation was found between the location of the decompression injury and the demonstration of abnormalities on the PET study. We conclude that FDG-PET imaging of the brain cannot reliably identify cerebral abnormalities in patients with decompression injuries and would be of limited benefit for monitoring therapy in patients with decompression illness.

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