

Pathological Brain Stem Evoked Potentials in Tortured Prisoners of War

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Aim. Evaluation of neurological impairment in prisoners of war (POWs) after release from Serbian detention camps.

Method. Brain stem evoked potentials were investigated in a representative sample of 21 POWs released from Serbian detention camps and in 32 control subjects. Brain stem evoked potentials were assessed using Brain Imager Device, after stimulation with unstructured stimuli of the "click" type.

Results. A statistically significant increase of interpeak latencies P1-P5 and P1-P3, and pathological values of the brain stem evoked potential parameters were found in the POWs compared to the control group. In contrast to the control group, POWs had a significant difference in the latency of P4 wave and amplitude of P1 wave between the right and left ear.

Conclusions. POWs released from detention camps had significantly altered brain stem evoked potentials 10 to 60 days after release. The lower part of the brain stem and the auditory nerve appear to be the most frequently affected sites.

Key words: evoked potentials, auditory, brain stem; prisoners of war