

E-Pearl of the Week

Brought to you by the Resident and Fellow Section of the Journal *Neurology*®.

February 25, 2009

Asterixis

Asterixis is a phenomenon of negative myoclonus in which the outstretched, extended wrists and fingers will appear to flap, briefly losing postural tone. Bilateral asterixis is often associated with hepatic encephalopathy, though it can occur in other metabolic encephalopathies such as with acute renal and pulmonary disease. It should be remembered, however, that localized lesions of the bilateral midbrain or pons can also result in bilateral asterixis. The involved area is likely the reticular formation which coordinates postural control.

Reference

Brazis PW, Masdeu JC, Biller J. Localization in Clinical Neurology, 4th ed. 2001:573.
Bril V, Sharpe JA, Ashby P. Midbrain asterixis. *Ann Neurol* 1979;6:362-364.