

E-Pearl of the Week

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The lumbar puncture in Guillain-Barre syndrome

The lumbar puncture in Guillain-Barre syndrome (GBS) demonstrates an elevated CSF protein level only two-thirds of the time in the first week of symptoms. So in one-third of cases the initial LP in GBS will be normal. An early LP in GBS is thus most helpful in evaluating for the presence or absence of cells. If a patient has more than 10 or 15 white cells—assuming the CSF doesn't demonstrate lots of red cells too—then the physician needs to consider rare GBS mimics, such as infections or lymphomatous or carcinomatous disease.

Reference

Dr. Burns receives a stipend as Podcast Editor for Neurology®, performs EMG studies in his neuromuscular practice (30% effort), and received compensation for a presentation on MG-QOL15, given to study investigators of eculizumab in myasthenia gravis.

Submitted by Ted Burns, MD