

Physician's
NENAD BLAU
MARINUS DURAN
MILAN E. BLASKOVICS
K. MICHAEL GIBSON
Editors

Guide
to the
Laboratory
Diagnosis
of Metabolic
Diseases



Second Edition



Springer

LUPIN EX. 1006

1 of 20

*Physician's Guide
to the Laboratory Diagnosis
of Metabolic Diseases*



with CD-ROM

BLAU
DURAN
BLASKOVICS
GIBSON
(Eds.)

Delay and mistakes in the diagnosis of inherited metabolic diseases may have devastating consequences. Reference laboratory data are scattered and clinical descriptions of rare conditions are hard to locate. This book describes 298 disorders, grouped into 35 chapters according to the type of condition. Within each group of disorders, chapters provide tables of pertinent clinical findings as well as reference and pathological values for crucial metabolites. Relevant metabolic pathways and diagnostic flow charts are included. There are three indices to make the book as user-friendly as possible: *Disorders index*, *Signs and symptoms index*, and *Tests index*. *The Physician's Guide* provides paediatricians and other physicians with a unique aid to help them select the correct diagnosis from a bewildering array of complex clinical and laboratory data.

This book includes a bonus CD-ROM further facilitating access to the content by means of a full-text search function.

ISBN 3-540-42542-X



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Foreword by C. R. Scriver

With 100 Figures and 270 Tables



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ISBN 3-540-42542-X 2nd Edition Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg New York

Title of the 1st Edition:
N. Blau, M. Duran, M.E. Blaskovics
Physician's Guide to the Laboratory Diagnosis of Metabolic Diseases
© 1996 Chapman & Hall

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Physician's guide to the laboratory diagnosis of metabolic diseases / [edited by] N. Blau
.. [et al.]. - 2nd ed. p.; cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 3-540-42542-X (hd.: alk.paper)
1. Metabolism - Disorders - Diagnosis - Handbooks, manuals, etc. 2. Metabolism,
Inborn errors of - Diagnosis - Handbooks, manuals, etc. 3. Diagnosis,
Laboratory - Handbooks, manuals, etc. I. Blau, N. (Nenad), 1946 -
[DNLM: 1. Metabolism, Inborn Errors - diagnosis. 2. Diagnosis, Differential.
3. Laboratory Techniques and Procedures. WD 205 P578 2002]
RB147.P476 2002 616.3'9075-dc21 2002021642

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Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg New York
a member of BertelsmannSpringer Science+Business Media GmbH
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Printed in Germany

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Graphics: Günther Hippmann, Nürnberg Typesetting: K+V Fotosatz, Beerfelden
Cover-Design: Erich Kirchner, Heidelberg Printing and bookbinding: Stürtz AG, Würzburg

Printed on acid-free paper SPIN 10764999 24/3136 PF 5 4 3 2 1 0



11.1 Introduction

Hyperammonemia (systemic venous or arterial plasma ammonia >80 in newborns or >50 $\mu\text{mol/L}$ after 28 days postnatally) is due either to an increased production exceeding the capacity to detoxify (as in colonization with urease containing microorganisms in an intestinal loop, a neurogenic bladder or with a ureterosigmoidostomy), or to a decreased detoxification capacity. Among the latter causes are primary or secondary defects of enzymes involved in ammonia detoxification or a deficiency of intermediates needed as substrates for a functional urea cycle, such as a nutritional, enzyme, or transport defect, or to interference with portal circulation so that portal blood does not reach the hepatocytes (a portacaval bypass or a patent ductus), which can cause "transient hyperammonemia of the premature". Ammonia detoxification is reduced in deficiencies of urea cycle enzymes, transport proteins (estimated incidence 1:30 000 newborns, [1]) in conditions where glutamate or acetyl CoA is decreased (valproate therapy and organic acidurias), with carnitine and CoA (sequestered by pathological acyl moieties) and defects of mitochondrial beta-oxidation or carnitine metabolism. These lead to a deficient formation of N-acetylglutamate (NAG), an obligate activator of the first step of ammonia detoxification, and thus to a functional NAGS deficiency. An acetyl CoA deficiency further reduces pyruvate carboxylase, which blocks gluconeogenesis. These two effects of an acetyl CoA deficiency lead to a Reye syndrome. Today, because more specific etiological diagnoses can be made, the Reye Syndrome is disappearing.

The actual enzyme activity in urea cycle disorders (UCD) in vivo is only partially assessed by in vitro assays (artificial conditions). It is a problem and must always be viewed in respect to the nitrogen load entering the pathway (Fig. 11.3). This depends as well on the exogenous nutritional supply or bacterial ammonia production in the gut as on the endogenous balance or imbalance between protein synthesis and catabolism. The clinical heterogeneity of the disorders and any prognostic predictions will thus only partly depend on the genetic background if residual protein is present. "Mild" leaky variants (unstable enzymes in vitro or residual enzyme activ-

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