

STATEMENT

Prof. Dr. Uta Meyding-Lamadé

Symptoms of the tick-borne encephalitis patient

Descriptions of disease compatible with tick-borne encephalitis date from the 1930's when the virus was first isolated by Russian scientists in 1937.

The clinical symptoms may vary. 40 to 60 percent of the patients recall a tick bite 4 to 28 days prior to evolving symptoms. A couple of days with low fever, headache, fatigue and muscle pain may precede the onset of symptoms with high fever, neck stiffness and disturbances of consciousness. The meningitis subtype is characterized by photophobia, and neck stiffness.

The meningoencephalitic subtype is characterized by altered consciousness, focal neurological signs like for example epileptic seizures, hemiparesis and neck stiffness and photophobia. Very old patients, babies and immunosuppressed patients may not have any signs of meningeal irritation. A polio-like type is common in TBE patients, characterized by a progressive motor weakness – easily being misdiagnosed in one of the differential diagnosis like myelitis, like Guillain Barré syndrome. Diagnostic procedures and clinical knowledge are getting more experienced by now – nevertheless there are still missing data with respect to all rare but typical manifestations.