

Mitochondrial abnormalities in the postviral fatigue syndrome.

Behan WM, More IA, Behan PO.

Department of Pathology, University of Glasgow, Scotland.

We have examined the muscle biopsies of 50 patients who had postviral fatigue syndrome (PFS) for from 1 to 17 years. We found mild to severe atrophy of type II fibres in 39 biopsies, with a mild to moderate excess of lipid. On ultrastructural examination, 35 of these specimens showed branching and fusion of mitochondrial cristae. Mitochondrial degeneration was obvious in 40 of the biopsies with swelling, vacuolation, myelin figures and secondary lysosomes. These abnormalities were in obvious contrast to control biopsies, where even mild changes were rarely detected. The findings described here provide the first evidence that PFS may be due to a mitochondrial disorder precipitated by a virus infection.

PMID: 1792865 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]