

PHYSICIAN FACT SHEET ON NORMAL PRESSURE HYDROCEPHALUS (NPH)

1. The clinical triad of NPH includes incontinence, gait instability, and cognitive decline.
2. Many persons with dementia have enlarged ventricles and the frequency of biopsy-proven Alzheimer's disease ranges from 31% to 50%.
3. Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus is a misnomer because CSF pressure is episodically elevated.
4. Additional studies, such as therapeutic CSF withdrawal or pressure monitoring, are suggested to confirm the diagnosis of NPH.
5. The cause of NPH is often reduced re-absorption of CSF through the arachnoidal granulations.
6. A ventriculoperitoneal shunt is the treatment for NPH.
7. Shunting in elderly persons is usually safe, although complications such as post-operative subdural hematomas do occur.
8. Shunting will often improve gait and bladder function, but not cognition.
9. The overall frequency of NPH in elderly patients is probably low.
10. The pathology of NPH is ventriculomegaly without other observed causes.