

Most Common Pituitary Diseases

Prolactinoma

- Most common type of secretory pituitary tumour.
- Prolactin normally stimulates the breasts to make milk.
- A prolactinoma causes the production of excess amounts of prolactin.
- Excess prolactin can also occur with certain medications.

Symptoms:

In Women:

- Loss or irregularity of periods

In Men:

- Reduced testosterone levels
- Erectile dysfunction

In both sexes

- Milk production
- Visual problems
- Headaches
- Infertility

Acromegaly

- A condition where too much growth hormone is produced from a pituitary tumour.

Symptoms in Adults:

- Hands and feet enlarging
- Coarser facial features and hair
- Skin may thicken and become oily
- Excessive sweating
- Fatigue
- Gum growth - teeth become crooked or dentures stop fitting properly
- Bite alterations (overgrowth of the lower jaw)

Pan-Hypopituitarism

- Occurs when levels of all pituitary hormones (TSH, ACTH, LH, FSH, and growth hormone) are lower than they should be, and therefore unable to stimulate their target organs normally.

Causes:

- Pressure from pituitary tumour on normal pituitary tissue
- Surgery to the pituitary
- Radiotherapy to pituitary or brain nearby
- Certain diseases which destroy the pituitary

Symptoms:

- Less mentally alert
- Weaker and less energetic
- Diminished libido and fertility problems
- Thinning scalp hair and body hair
- May look pale
- Skin may be softer, thinner & less elastic
- May have lower blood pressure
- Sensitivity to the cold
- Impaired stress response

Cushing's Disease

- Excess secretion of the hormone ACTH from a pituitary tumor, stimulating the adrenal glands to produce too much cortisol.

Symptoms:

- Muscle weakness - muscle wasting of arms and legs
- Fatness - moon face, deposit of fat on neck and torso
- Skin changes - skin becomes papery and bruises easily; stretch marks on the abdomen, back and thighs
- Excess hair - women have more hair growth on the face, upper body, abdomen and thighs
- Mood disturbance - from depression to euphoria