CLINICAL SNAPSHOT

Iatrogenic Anticholinergic Overdose

An accidental atropine overdose in a gynecologist's office (20 mg IV) gave this young woman a classic anticholinergic overdose syndrome. The immediately recognizable manifestations produced by blockade of the body's muscarinic receptors have been given picturesque names: "red as a beet"—erythema due to vasodilation; "dry as a bone" and "hot as a hare"—inhibition of sweating, with impaired thermoregulation; "blind as a bat"—maximal mydriasis and impaired accommodation. Two further florid, though not visually evident, manifestations are "mad as a hatter"—delirium due to muscarinic blockade in the central nervous system, and "full as a flask"—impaired bladder emptying.

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Conflict of interest statement

The author declares that no conflict of interest exists.

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