

# Mitochondrial Disorders

## The New Frontier



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# Conflicts of Interest

Edison Pharmaceutical: Research and Travel

Division of Vaccine Compensation: HHS

American Academy of Neurology: CPT and Speaker

newMentor: Content Editor

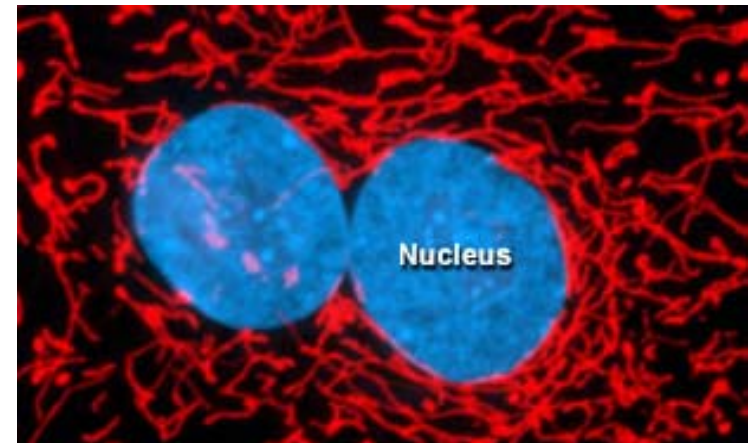
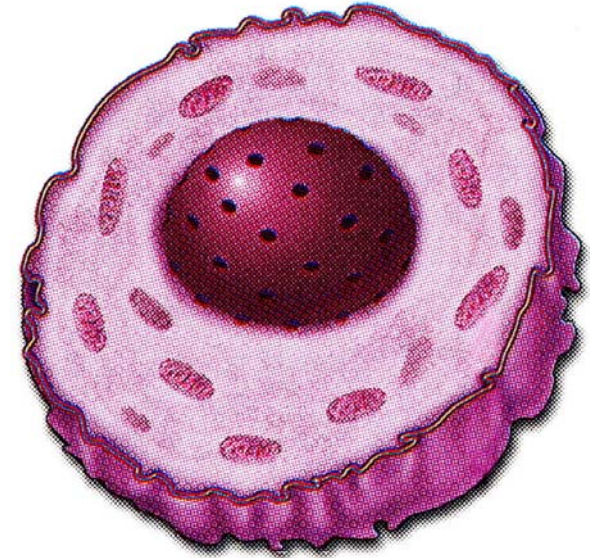
United Mitochondrial Disease Foundation Speaker



Diana  
DOB 6/20/1982  
DOD 9/4/1994

# What Are Mitochondria?

- subcellular organelles
- 1 micron in length
  - cigar shaped (in vitro)
  - complex structure in vivo
- Comprised of ~1100 structural and enzymatic proteins
- Most of these proteins are encoded by nDNA
- 13 proteins of the ETC are encoded by mtDNA, resides in the mitochondria
  - ~16.5kB
  - 37 genes
    - 2rRNA
    - 22 tRNA
    - 13 structural proteins of the ETC



# What do mitochondria do?

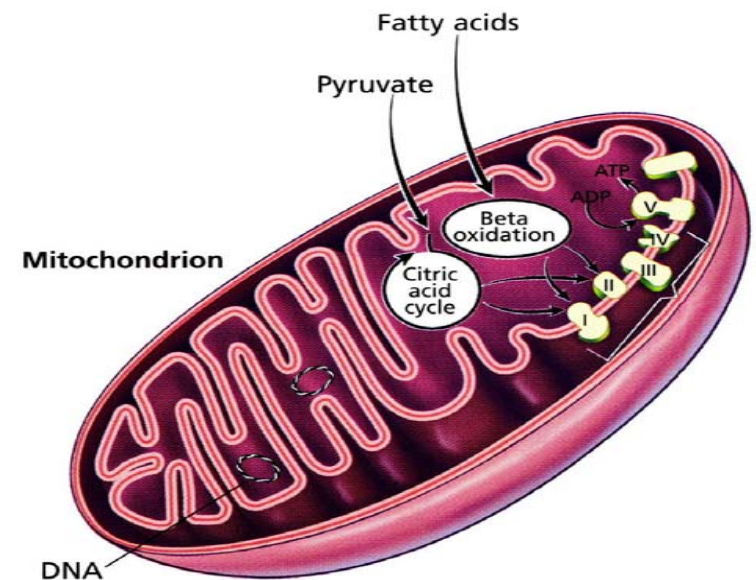
(1) generate ATP ☀️

(2) critical component of apoptosis



(3) generate free radicals  $O_2 \rightsquigarrow O_2^\bullet$

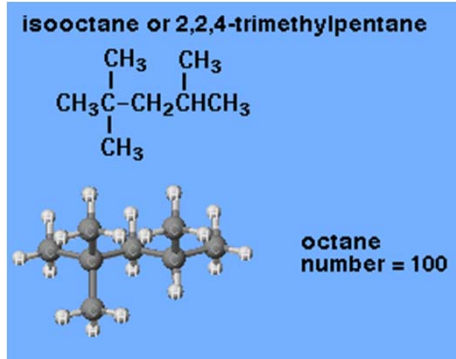
(4) Roles in most neurodegenerative diseases and some cancers ⌚





# Energy is stored in covalent bonds





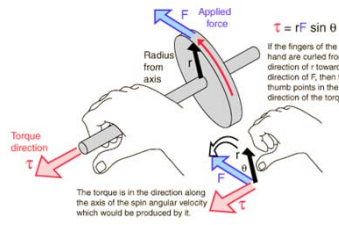
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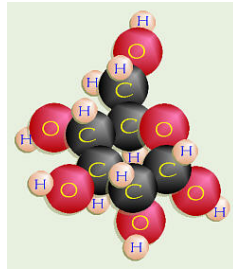


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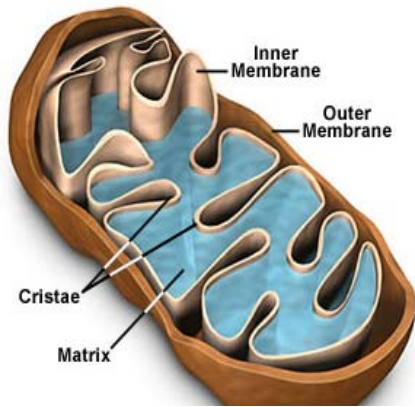








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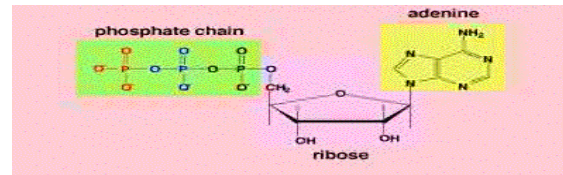
Vitamins and Cofactors  
 CoQ10  
 Lipoic Acid  
 B1, B2, B3, B5, Folate  
 Fe/S Core, Cu Core



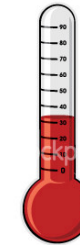
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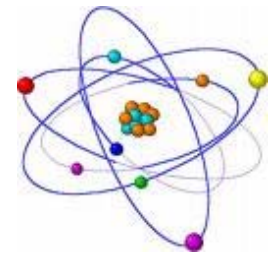
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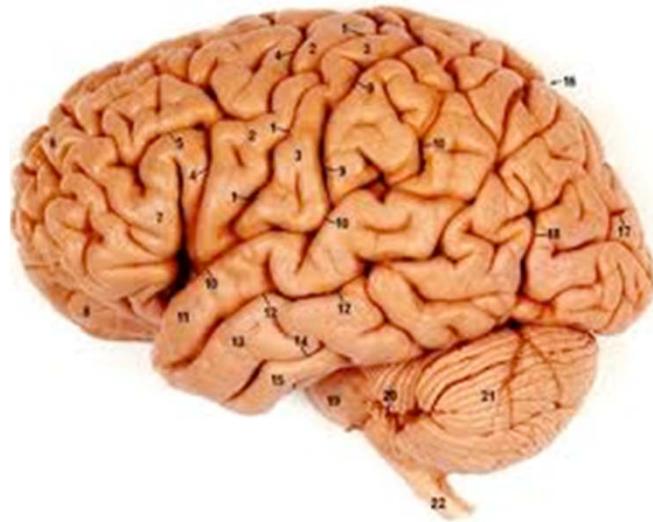


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13 Watts  
11 kCal/Hr

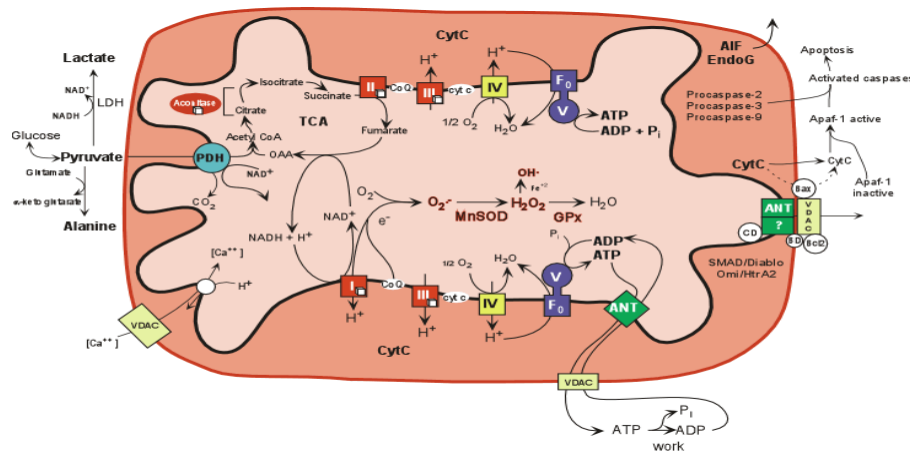


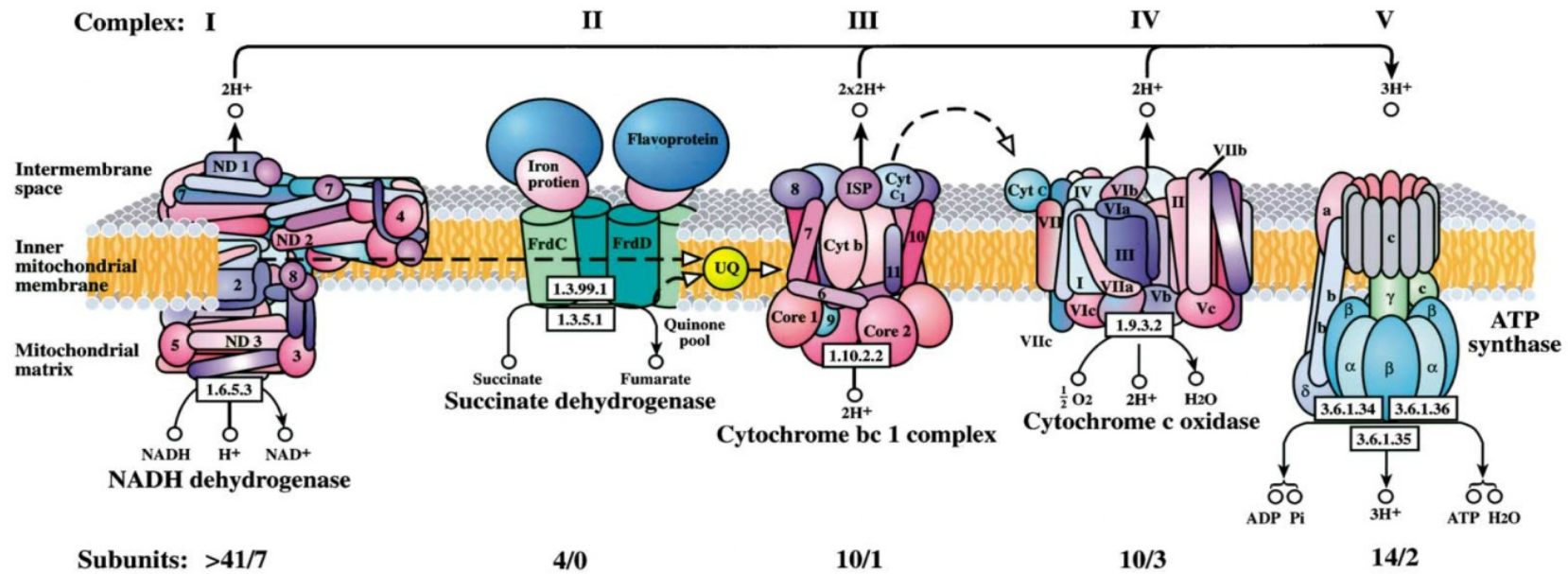


Carbs, Fats, Proteins + O<sub>2</sub>



H<sub>2</sub>O + CO<sub>2</sub> + heat + ATP + intermediates + O<sub>2</sub>





## The Electron Transport Chain

OXPHOS

ATP Production

5 Complexes

~100 different proteins

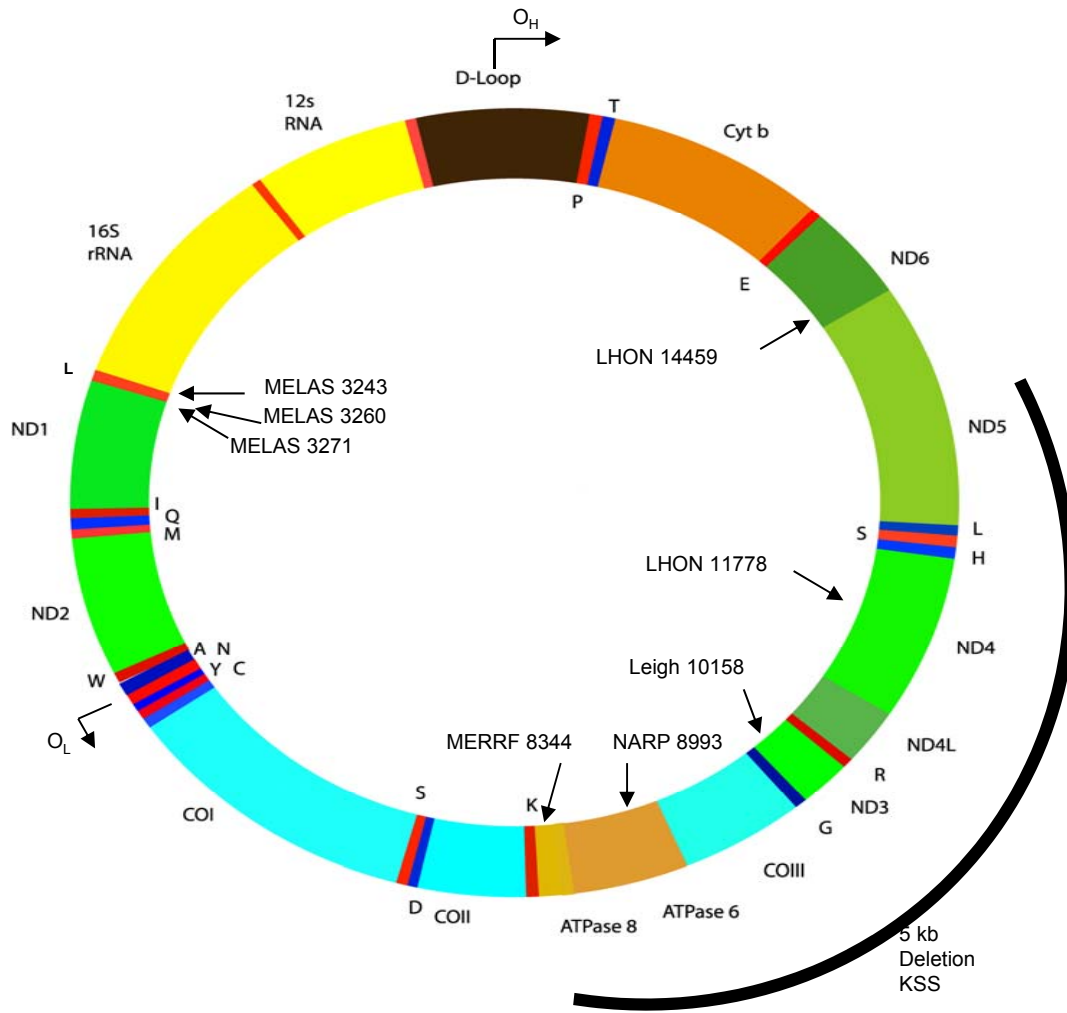
1098 genes supporting the function of the ETC



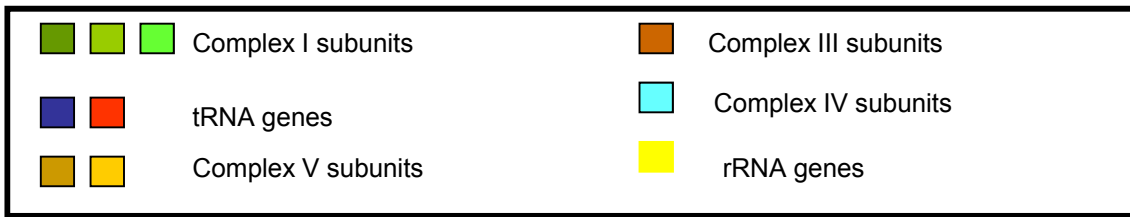
# Mitochondrial Genetics 101

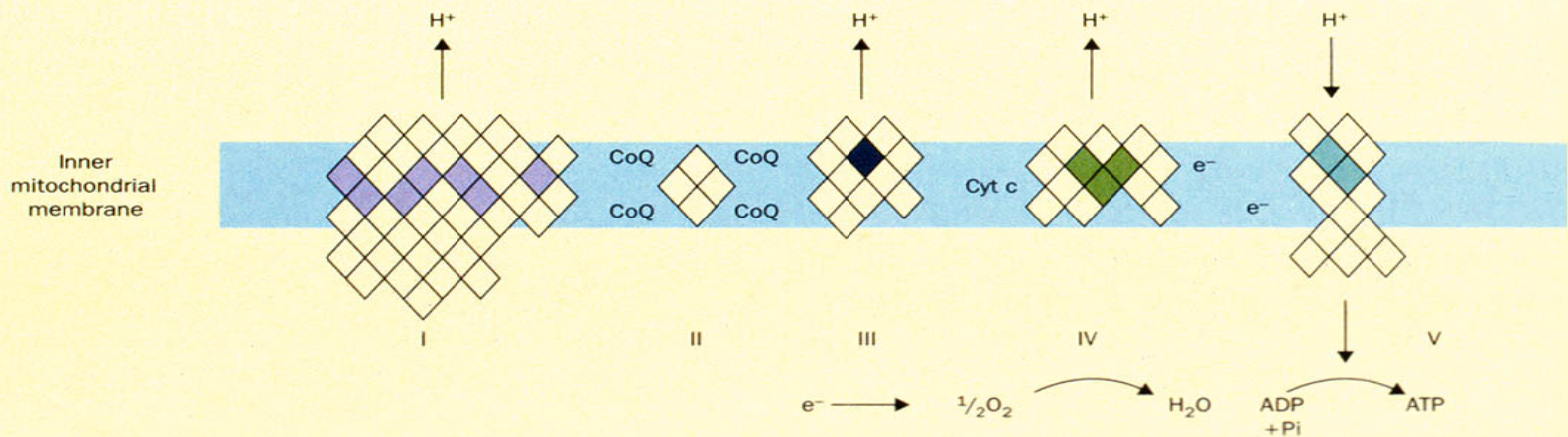
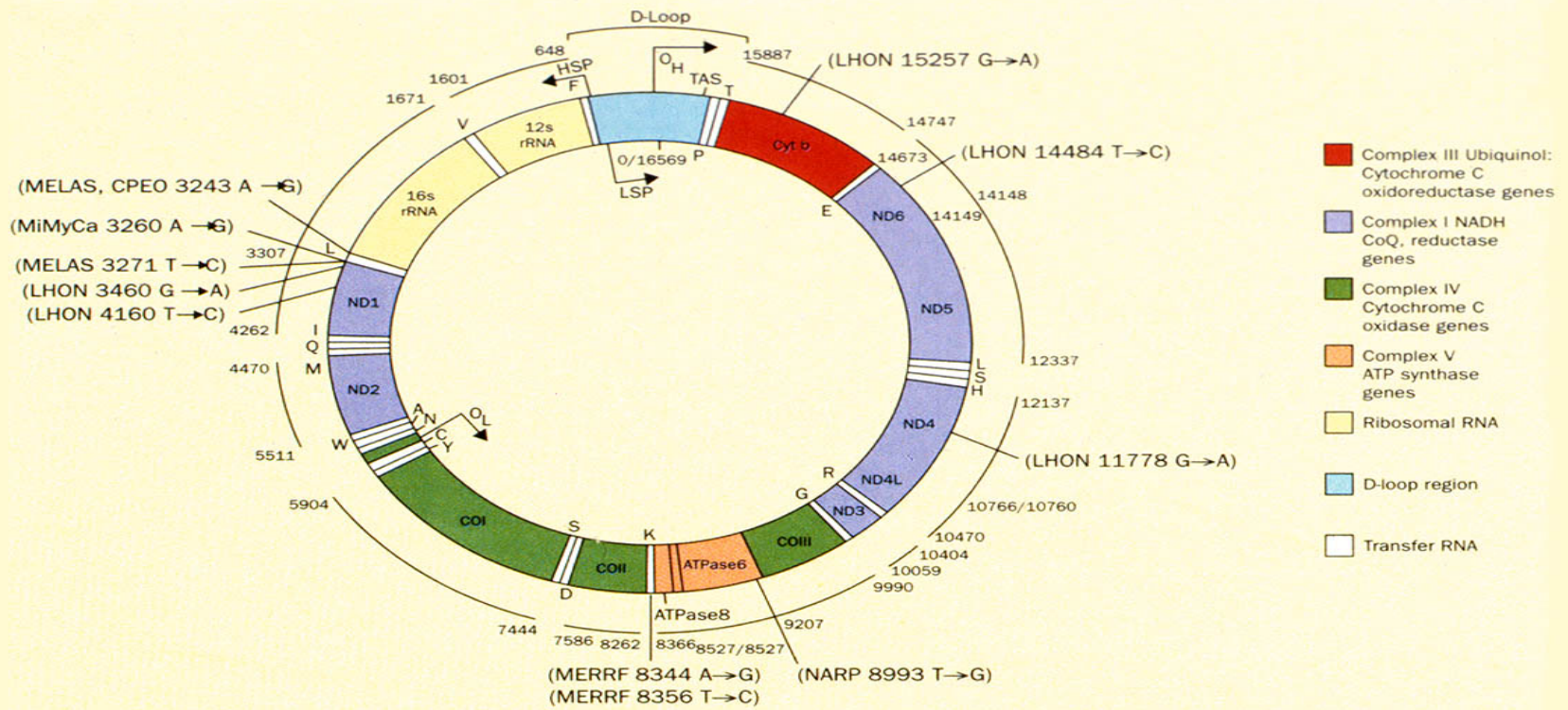
- The mitochondria contain its own DNA
  - Small – 16,569 base pairs
  - 2-10 copies of mtDNA per mitochondria
  - maternally inherited
  - 37 genes
    - 22 tRNAs
    - 2 rRNA
    - 13 proteins
  - some mutations are more harmful than others
  - mutations are not all or none (heteroplasmy)
- Only 13 of the ~ 1500 mitochondrial structural proteins are encoded by the mtDNA





Mutation	Clinical Symptoms
MELAS 3243 A→G (tRNA-leu)	Stroke-like episodes, type 2 diabetes, deafness, migraines, short stature, encephalopathy (with stress), exercise intolerance, cardiomyopathy.
MELAS 3260 A→G (tRNA-leu)	Similar to MELAS 3243 but cardiomyopathy more common, exercise induced rhabdomyolysis.
MELAS 3271 T→C (tRNA-leu)	Similar to MELAS 3243 (less common).
MERRF 8344 A→G ((tRNA-Lys)	Myoclonus, epilepsy, ataxia, dementia, deafness, neuropathy.
NARP 8993 T→C or T→G NARP/MILS	Adult: Retinitis pigmentosa, ataxia, neuropathy. Child (Leigh's syndrome): Psychomotor regression, ataxia, ophthalmoparesis, ataxic breathing, episodic vomiting and encephalopathy.
Leigh 10158 T→C ND3	Leigh's disease as above for MILS 8993.
LHON 11778 G→A ND4	Painless visual loss over weeks > months, more common in men (onset 20s).
LHON 14459 G→A ND6	LHON as above +/- dystonia.





Step-wise CNS deterioration (+Sz, + movement disorder, + ataxia)

Ptosis and PEO

Progressive optic atrophy or retinitis pigmentosa

High frequency hearing loss

Cardiac conduction defects

Myopathy or Cardiomyopathy

Hepatopathy

Neuropathy (large fiber)

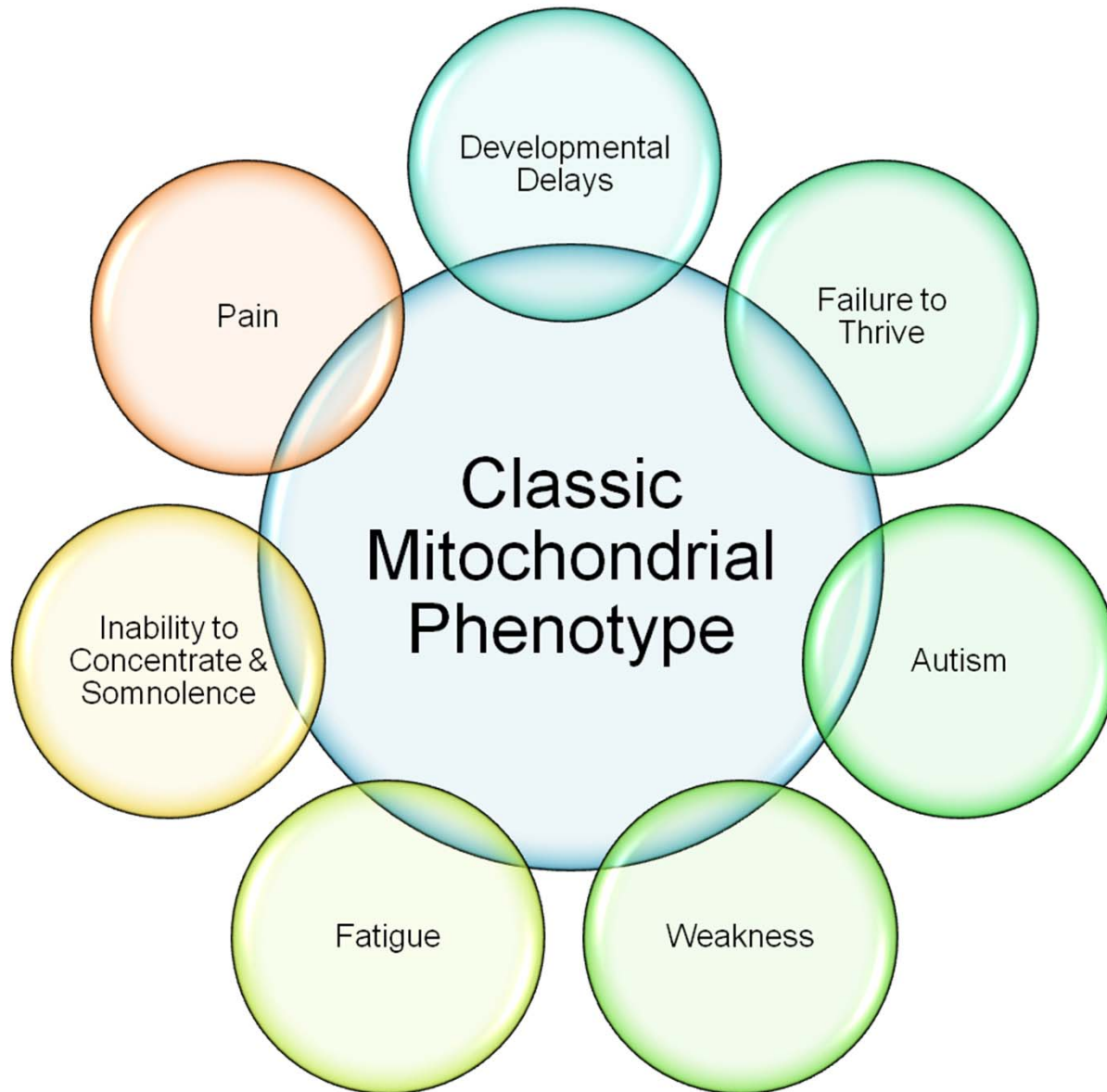
Systemic Lipomatosis or lipodystrophy

Classic MRI Findings (symmetric, deep gray)

Biochemical: true LA, classic amino acid pattern, classic organic acid patterns

## **The Classic Mitochondrial Phenotype**





**TABLE 1 Red-Flag Findings in Mitochondrial Disease**

<b>Neurologic</b>
Cerebral stroke-like lesions in a nonvascular pattern
Basal ganglia disease
Encephalopathy: recurrent or with low/moderate dosing of valproate
Neurodegeneration
Epilepsia partialis continua
Myoclonus
Ataxia
MRI findings consistent with Leigh disease
Characteristic MRS peaks
Lactate peak at 1.3 ppm TE (time to echo) at 35 and 135
Succinate peak at 2.4 ppm
<b>Cardiovascular</b>
Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy with rhythm disturbance
Unexplained heart block in a child
Cardiomyopathy with lactic acidosis (5 mM)
Dilated cardiomyopathy with muscle weakness
Wolff-Parkinson-White arrhythmia
<b>Ophthalmologic</b>
Retinal degeneration with signs of night blindness, color-vision deficits, decreased visual acuity, or pigmentary retinopathy
Ophthalmoplegia/paresis
Fluctuating, dysconjugate eye movements
Ptosis
Sudden- or insidious-onset optic neuropathy/atrophy
<b>Gastroenterologic</b>
Unexplained or valproate-induced liver failure
Severe dysmotility
Pseudo-obstructive episodes
<b>Other</b>
A newborn, infant, or young child with unexplained hypotonia, weakness, failure to thrive, and a metabolic acidosis (particularly lactic acidosis)
Exercise intolerance that is not in proportion to weakness
Hypersensitivity to general anesthesia
Episodes of acute rhabdomyolysis

**TABLE 2 Nonspecific Findings in Mitochondrial Disease**

<b>Disease</b>
Constitutional
Failure to thrive
Short stature
Intrauterine growth retardation
Microcephaly
<b>Neurologic</b>
Hypotonia
Infantile spasms
Intractable epilepsy
Unexplained movement disorder
Hearing loss (sensorineural)
Axonal neuropathy
Status epilepticus with an additional red-flag or nonspecific feature
Coma
Ototoxicity to certain medications
<b>Cardiovascular</b>
Tachycardia (postural or paroxysmal)
<b>Ophthalmologic</b>
Optic nerve hypoplasia, pigmentary retinopathy
<b>Gastroenterologic</b>
Chronic or cyclic vomiting
Chronic unexplained constipation or diarrhea
<b>Dermatologic</b>
Symmetric lipomatosis
<b>Endocrine</b>
Hypothyroidism
Hypoparathyroidism
Idiopathic growth hormone deficiency
<b>Renal</b>
Renal tubular dysfunction (includes renal tubular acidosis and/or aminoaciduria)
Nephrotic syndrome
<b>Imaging</b>
Unexplained basal ganglia lesions
Unexplained central nervous system atrophy (cerebral or cerebellar)
Unexplained leukodystrophy
<b>Family history</b>
Sudden infant death syndrome
Multigenerational maternal inheritance pattern



**Classic Mitochondrial Disorders**

# Leigh Syndrome

- Healthy child until age 3
- Non-specific viral infection
- Lost the ability to ambulate due to ataxia, hemiparesis then bilateral hemiparesis
- lactic acidosis
- eye movement and bulbar dysfunction
- dystonia
- neuropathy
- some recovery over 6 months followed by deterioration
- muscle biopsy may be normal unless due to complex IV defects
- clinical: heavily CNS/PNS during the natural life span
- host of mtDNA, nDNA mutations result in this presentation
- not clear why some mutations cause Leigh Syndrome and others do not



Leigh, D. :

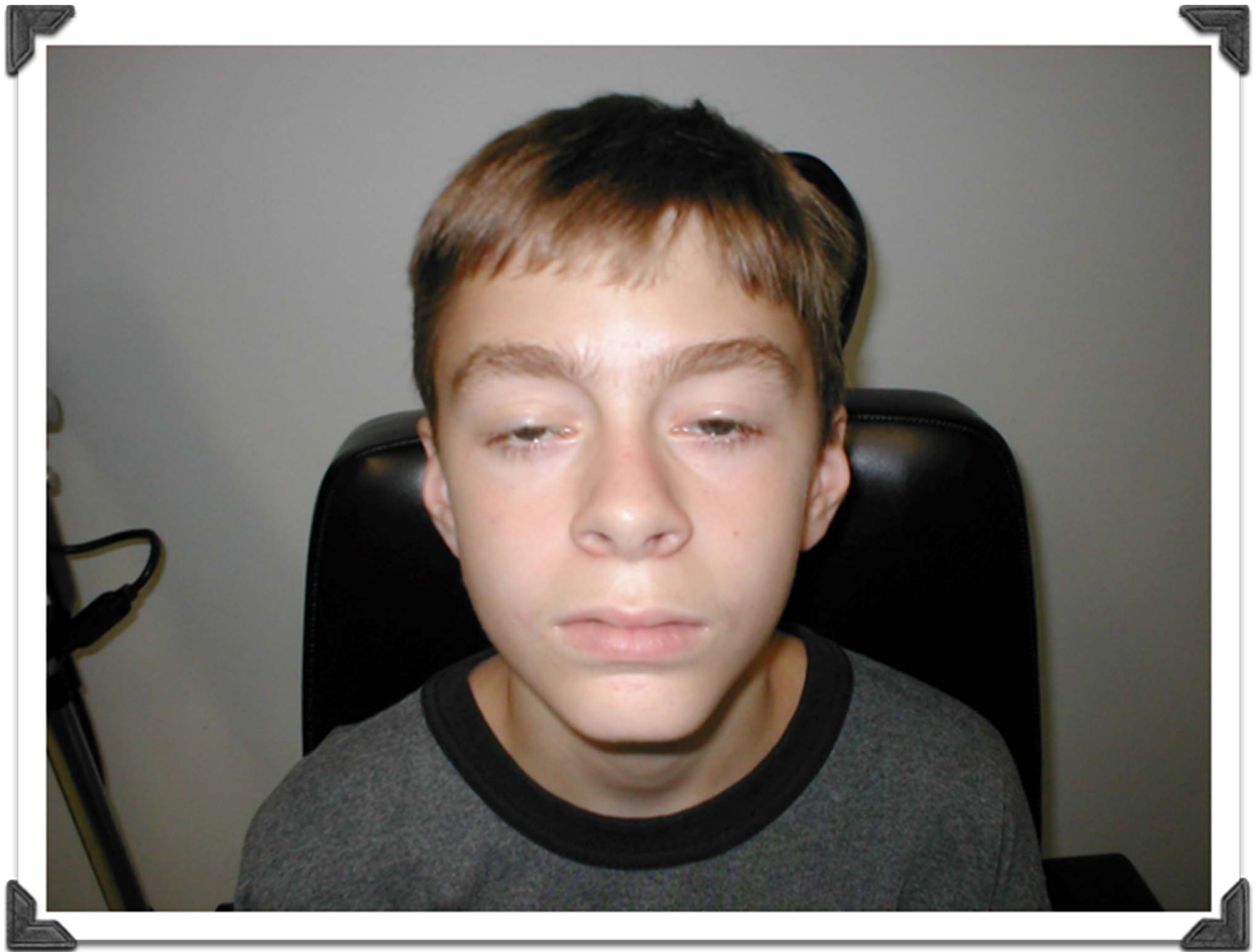
Subacute necrotizing encephalomyelopathy in an infant. *J. Neurol. Neurosurg. Psychiat.* 14: 216-221, 1951



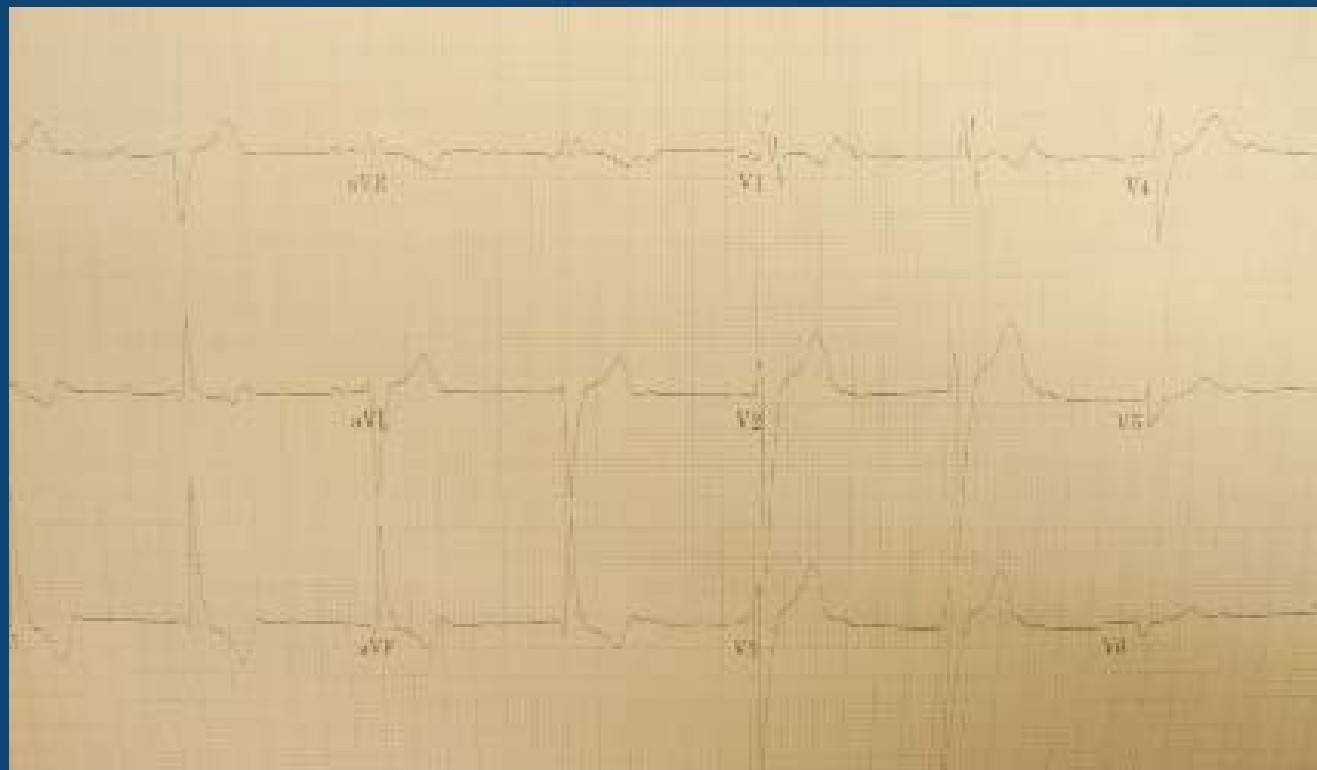
# Leigh Syndrome



4 yo boy with ataxia after  
viral infection showing  
deep gray matter involvement

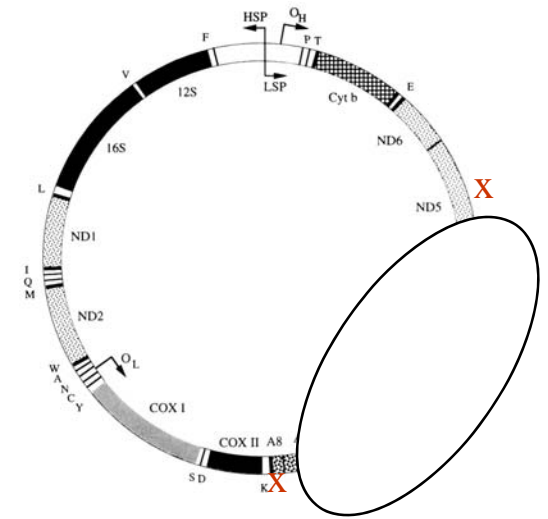


U3-2247468      15-OCT-1998 12:27  
Vital sign      47 BPM      99.0 mmHg      98.0 mmHg      98.0 mmHg  
PE normal      0      0      0      0  
QRS duration      118      118      118      118  
QTc/QT      358/441      358/441      358/441      358/441  
P-R-T axis      0 118 -38      0 118 -38      0 118 -38      0 118 -38



# Kearn Sayre Syndrome

- Triad
  - high frequency hearing loss
  - Retinitis pigmentosa
  - PEO
- Other features
  - myopathy
  - diabetes
  - retinopathy
  - dementia and seizures
  - cardiomyopathy
  - dysphagia and weight loss
- 5 kB deletion in all (>97%) of the mtDNA from middle of ND5 to ATP8; (4977 base pairs from 8488 to 13460; 13 base pair repeat at mutation break point)

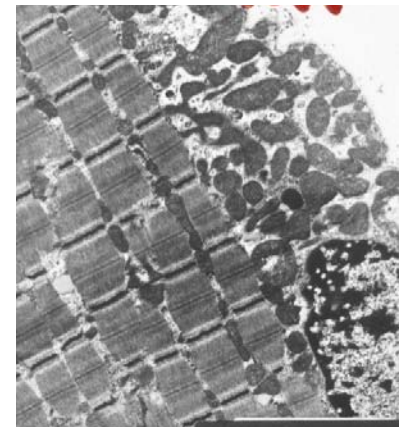
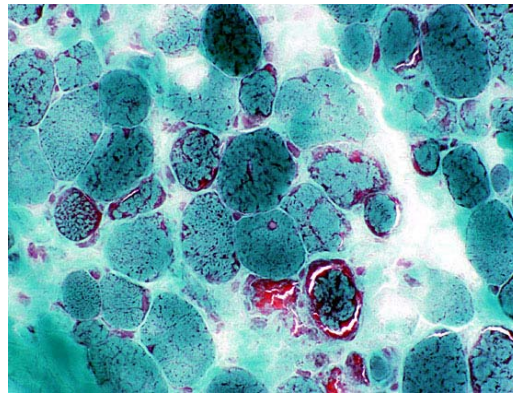


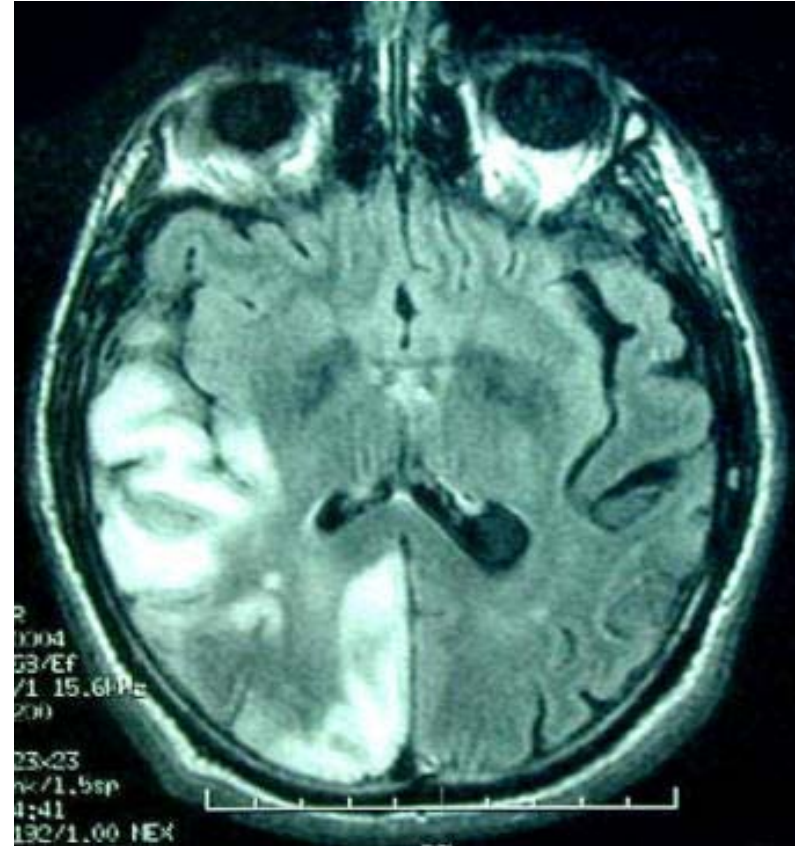
Kearns T, Sayre G (1958). "Retinitis pigmentosa, external ophthalmoplegia, and complete heart block: unusual syndrome with histologic study in one of two cases". A.M.A. Archives of Ophthalmology 60 (2): 280-9



# Pearson Syndrome

- My index patient
- DOB 6/20/82
- Anemia (Hb 8) and FFT noted at 8 months
- Presented with severe lactic acidosis (8 mmol/l)
- Sideroblastic anemia
- digestive problems
- moderate mental retardation
- myopathy
- neuropathy
- ptosis and later PEO
- progressive hearing loss
- **diabetes mellitus**
- heart block
- cardiomyopathy
- died in 1995
- definitive diagnosis showing common KSS deletion 1993



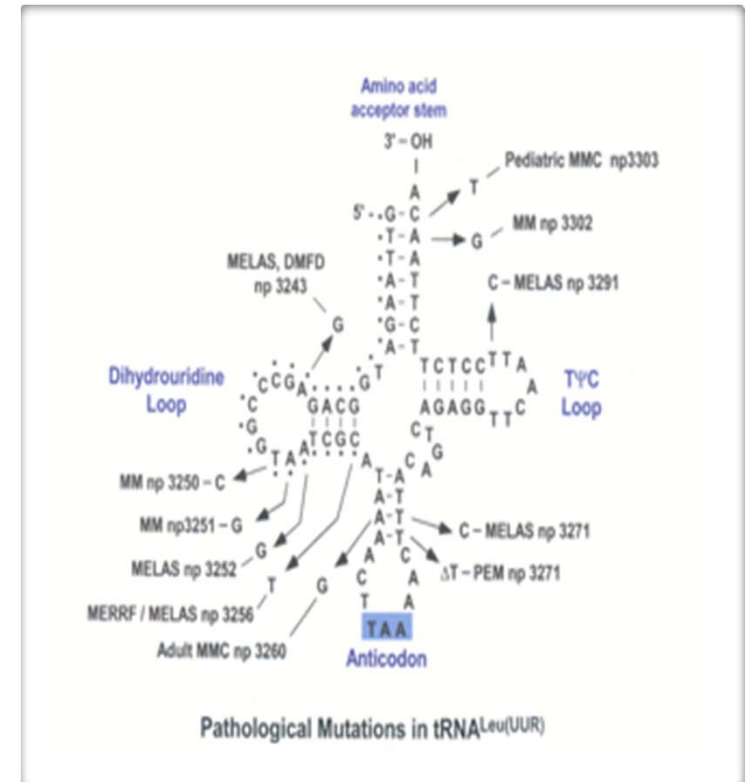


MELAS

# MELAS - a mtDNA point mutation disorder

## Family History Gives Clues

- 5 yo girl; birth weight 6'15"
- Mother; 33 with **DM2**, bipolar disease, fibromyalgia, hearing loss
- sat @ 7 mo, walked @ 16 mo, 1st words at 15 mo, sentences at 22 months
- FTT
  - required ng-tube at age 31 months →g-tube
- Age 3 -EKG: WPW
  - Cardiac ablation performed
- Status epilepticus at age 4
  - MRI showed a focal abnormality in the left occipital lobe
- Lactic acid elevated







# Why Should You Listen Now?

*Because 2% of people carry 1 mutation in this gene*

# Case Report

- 15 year old young woman evaluated for jerky limb movements -- diagnosis was “mannerisms” (1993)
- At age 19, patient has her first seizure (1997)
  - EEG multifocal spikes
  - MRI normal
  - started on carbamazepine - ineffective
  - changed to valproate
- Three months later
  - florid liver failure
  - undergoes a liver transplant

# Case Report

- Muscle biopsy and mitochondrial evaluation @ Emory
  - biochemical defects identified
  - genetic evaluation normal started on supplements
- 1998: My first office visit
  - seizures, poorly controlled
  - jerky movements, appeared both like myoclonus or chorea
  - bright, energetic
  - returned to college, working in the radio business
- 2000: No Change
- 2002: No Change

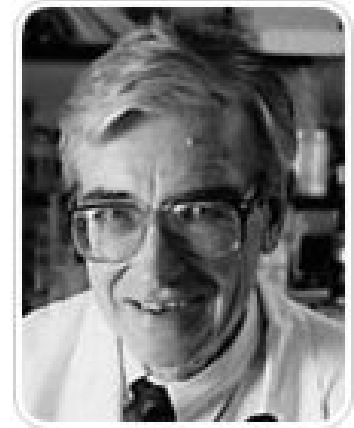
# Case Report

- November 2005
  - symptoms and signs
    - seizures better controlled
    - PEO - scheduled for surgery
    - slurred speech
    - ataxia
    - poor night vision
    - hearing loss
    - memory difficulties
    - inability to maintain employment
    - loss of DTRs



Step back 75 years

# Alpers Syndrome



- Infantile fatal cerebral disorder that was first described by Bernard Alpers in 1931; “poliodystrophy” -- refractory seizures, developmental regression, cortical blindness, age of onset 3-7 years, some with identified developmental disabilities and others normal
- 1975 - study showing mitochondrial ultrastructural changes in Alpers poliodystrophy
- 1976 Huttenlocher described the hepatic features (micronodular necrosis) and familial nature of the disorder; “Huttenlocher variant” or “Alpers-Huttenlocher syndrome”
  - Based on pattern of illness - autosomal recessive
  - many children present with epilepsia partialis continua or status epilepticus
  - progressive neuropathy and spasticity
  - Death 1-20 years into the course, often from liver failure

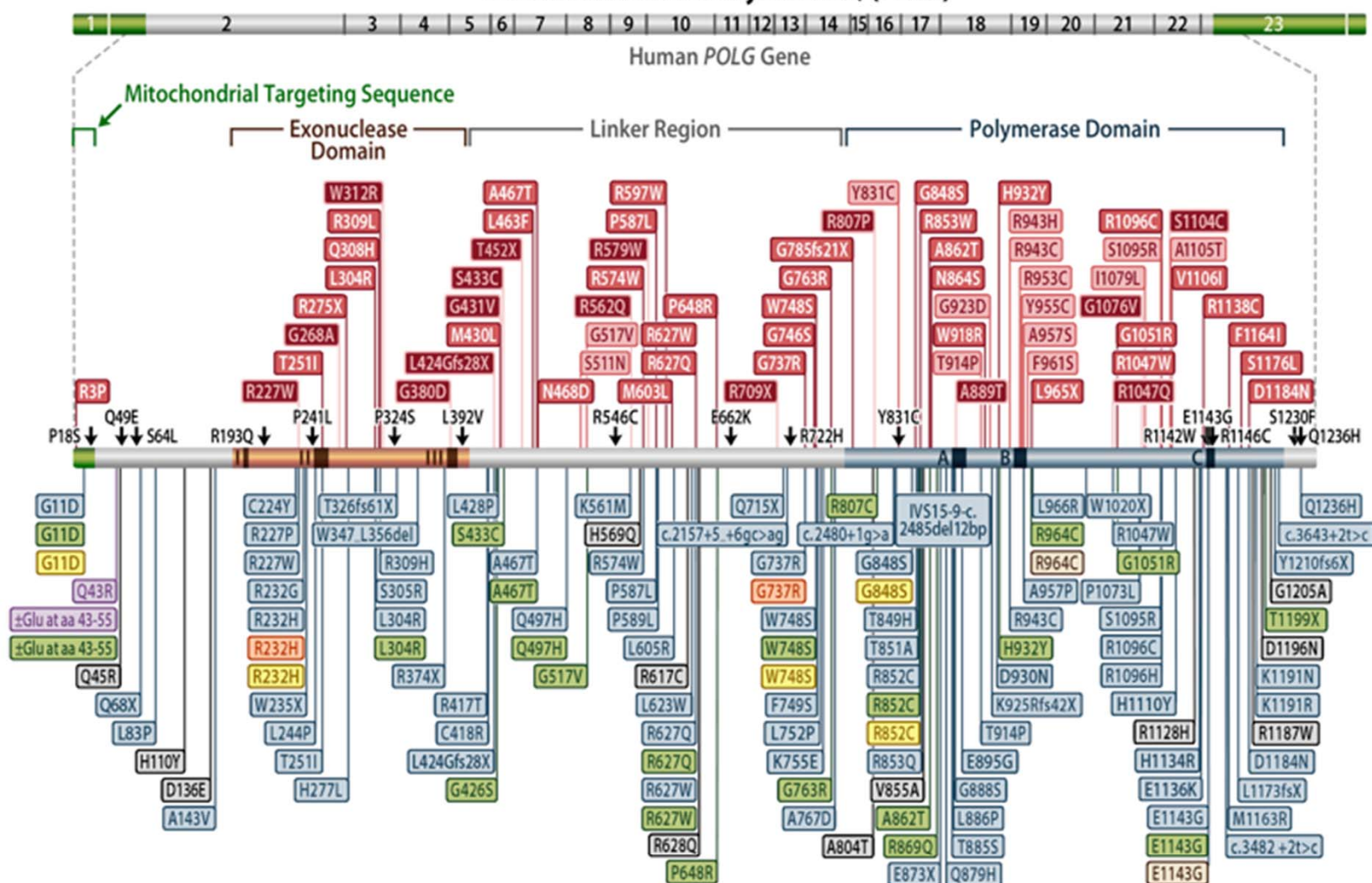
**B. J. Alpers. Diffuse progressive degeneration of the grey matter of the cerebrum. Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry, Chicago, 1931, 25: 469-505.**

# Alpers Poliiodystrophy

- 1992 Bicknese et al describe fatal valproate toxicity in a boy with “Huttenlocher variant of Alpers' syndrome”
- 1996 Copeland characterizes and clones human the polymerase gamma gene
- 1996 Naviaux reported in abstract form biochemical evidence of mitochondrial dysfunction
- 2001 First mutations described in this gene causing progressive ophthalmoplegia
- 2004 Naviaux et al find several families with Alpers harboring 7 distinct mutations in polymerase gamma (*POLG*) Naviaux, Nguyen POLG mutations associated with Alpers' syndrome and mitochondrial DNA depletion. Ann Neurol 55: 706-712; 2004.

and one year later.....

## Mutations in DNA Polymerase $\gamma$ (POLG)



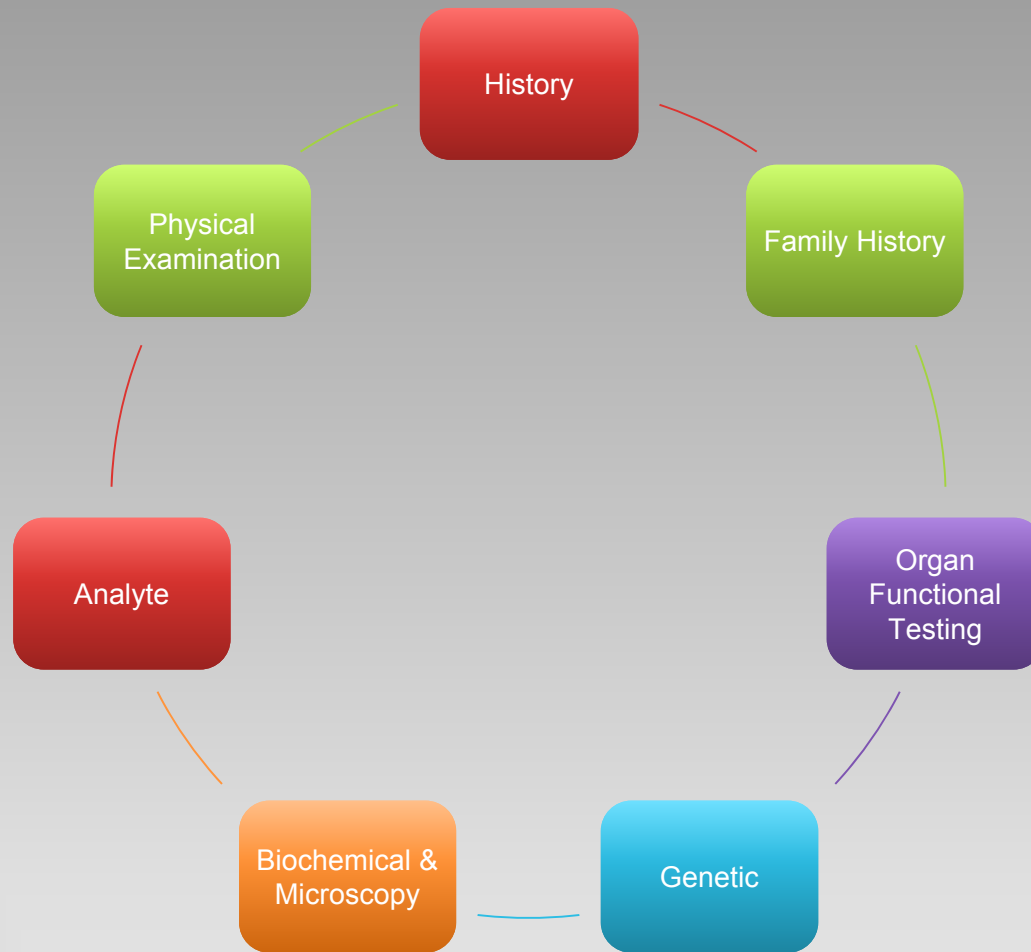
Progressive External Ophthalmoplegia (PEO)	adPEO	arPEO	Sporadic
Alpers, Myocerebrohepatopathy and other Infantile Hepatocerebral Syndromes with mtDNA depletion			
Ataxia-Neuropathy Syndrome, MIRAS, SANDO, SCAE, Friedreich's Ataxia			
Male Infertility, Testicular Cancer, Idiopathic Parkinsons   NRTI Toxicity			
Charcot-Marie Tooth Disease   Leigh's Syndrome   Other or Unclear			
Single Nucleotide Polymorphism ↓			

Copeland, 2011  
<http://tools.niehs.nih.gov/polg/>



**Table 2.** Clinical features in patients with *POLG* mutations

System	Feature
Psychiatric	Depression Psychosis Dementia
Seizures	Myoclonus Focal motor seizures Generalized seizures Status epilepticus
Extrapyramidal	Parkinsonism Chorea
Cerebellum 'Cerebrovascular'	Ataxia Migraine Stroke-like episodes
Special sensory	Sensorineural deafness Retinopathy Cataract
Muscle	Ptosis and external ophthalmoplegia Proximal myopathy Exercise intolerance
Peripheral nerve	Sensory neuronopathy/ganglionopathy Axonal sensorimotor neuropathy
Endocrine	Diabetes Primary ovarian failure Primary testicular failure
Gastrointestinal	Liver failure
Cardiac	Gastrointestinal dysmotility Cardiomyopathy



# What is the Diagnostic Approach?

# Diagnosis: Biomarkers

- Lactic acid (plasma, CSF, urine) increased
- Lactate:Pyruvate ratio increased
- Abnormal amino acid pattern (□alanine, alanine:lysine, proline, sarcosine, glutamine and □arginine, citrulline\_
- Abnormal organic acids
- Low carnitine, abnormal acylcarnitine patterns

Abnormal results are not specific  
Normal results are not sensitive to eliminate the diagnosis

# When Should We Think of Something Else?

Rett

- Lactic Acidosis
- Similar Clinical Presentation

PWS  
Angelman

- Lactic Acidosis
- Similar Clinical Presentation

Lesch-Nyhan  
Syndrome

- Lactic Acidosis
- Similar Clinical Presentation

Glycogen  
Storage

- Lactic Acidosis
- Similar Clinical Presentation

# A Typical Lab Evaluation: 1989-

## Blood

Lactic Acid  
Amino Acids  
Total and Free carnitine with acylcarnitine profile  
B12 level  
Methylmalonic acid  
Ammonia  
CK  
CMP + ? HBA1C  
CBC  
CoQ10 (WBC)  
Free T4 + TSH

## Urine

Routine Urine Analysis  
Organic Acids  
Amino Acids  
Carnitines + Acylcarnitine Profile  
Acylglycine  
Guanidoacetate + Creatine  
Purine and Pyrimidines

Skin biopsy for EM & Fibroblast  
Culture: acylcarnitine probe

Fragile X  
SCN1A  
Rett  
Prader-Willi / Angelman  
CSF Neurotransmitter Disorder  
Disorders of Glycosylation

**Muscle  
Biopsy**

**NextGen Expanded  
Nuclear  
Gene Testing**

*Dysmorphic  
+  
Cognitive Problems?*

aCGH

OR

*Specific mtDNA Disorder?*

Specific mtDNA point mutation or LR-PCR

*Maternal Pattern?  
mtDNA-spectrum?*

Whole Mito Genome

*Specific nDNA  
Disorder?*

Specific nDNA gene sequence

# A Typical Lab Evaluation: 2013

Blood  
Lactic Acid  
Amino Acids  
Total and Free carnitine  
B12 level  
Methylmalonic acid  
Ammonia  
CK  
CMP + ? HBA1C  
CBC  
CoQ10 (WBC)  
Free T4 + TSH

Urine  
Routine Urine Analysis  
Organic Acids  
Guanidoacetate + Creatine

Fragile X  
SCN1A  
Rett  
Prader-Willi / Angelman  
CSF Neurotransmitter Disorder  
Disorders of Glycosylation

*Dysmorphic  
+  
Cognitive Problems?*

aCGH

OR

*Maternal Pattern?  
mtDNA-spectrum?*

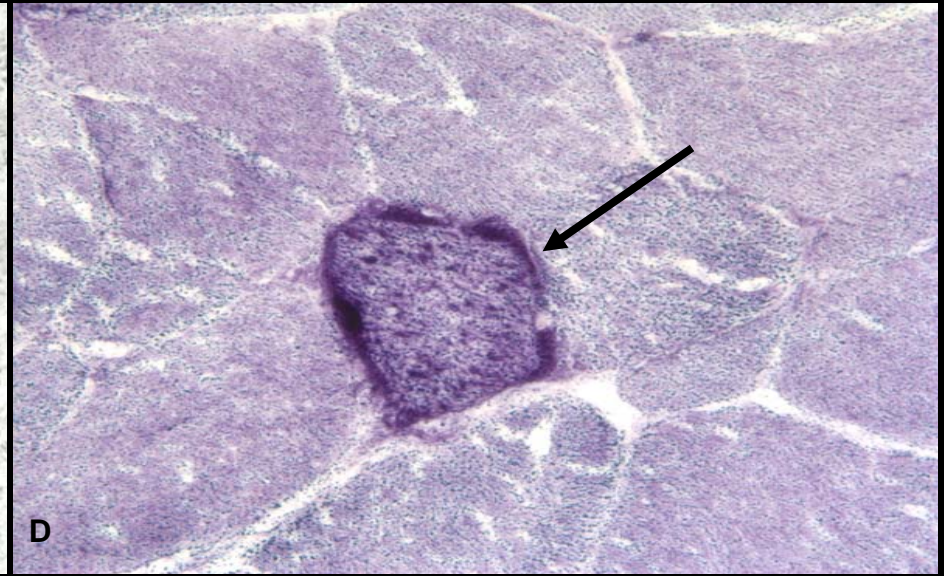
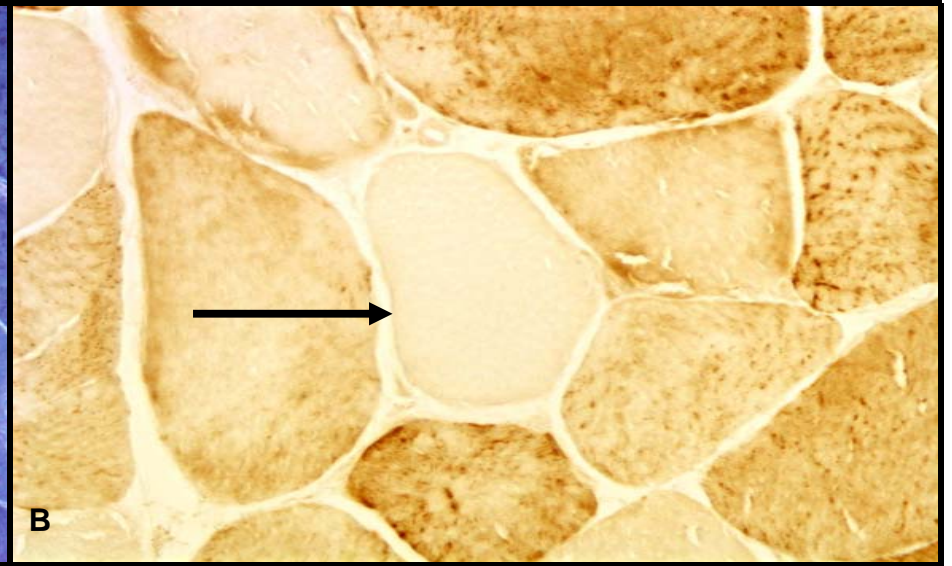
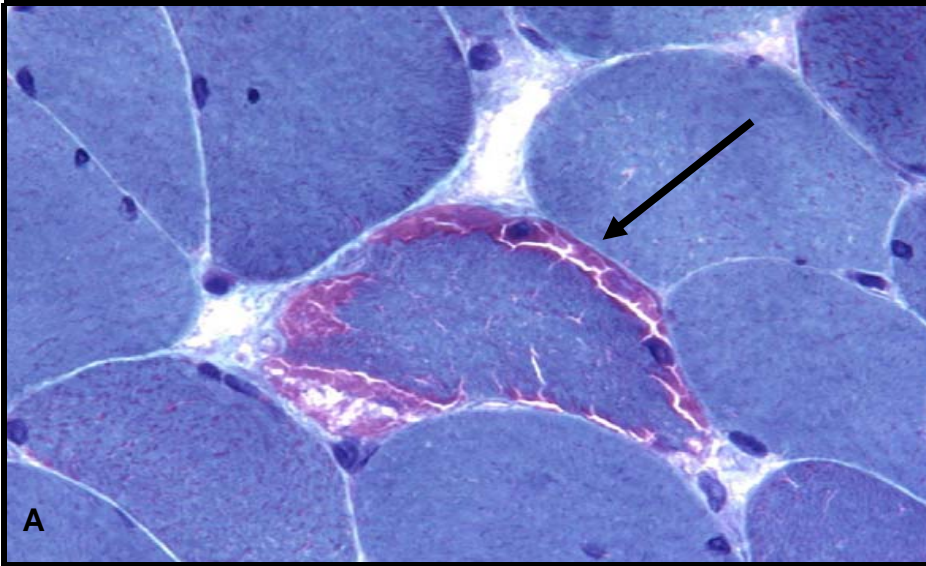
Whole Mito Genome

NextGen Expanded  
Nuclear  
Gene Testing

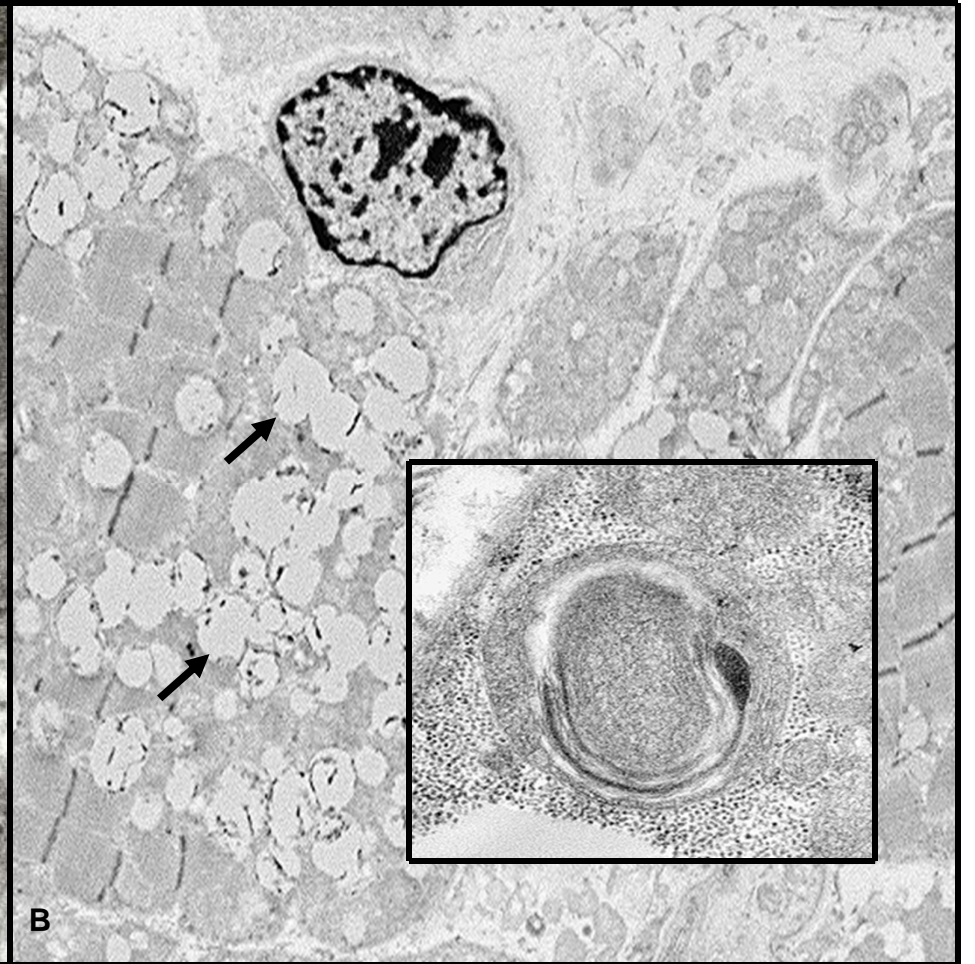
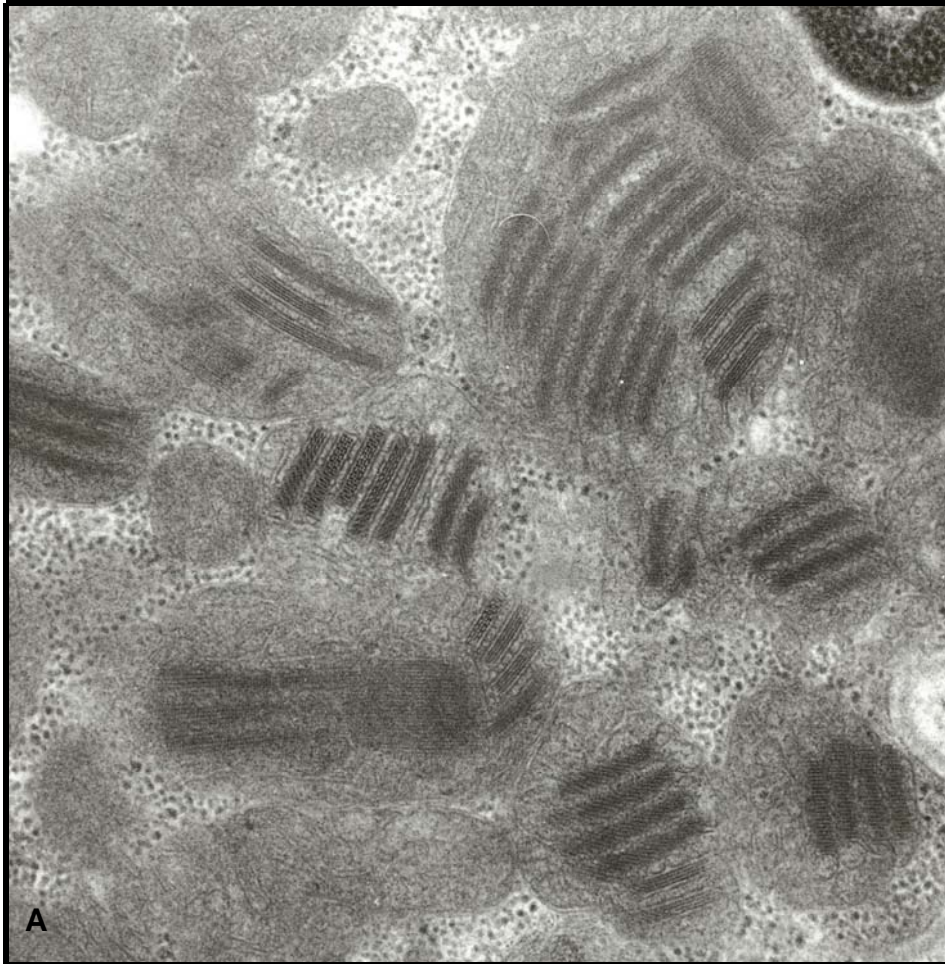


# THE POWER OF THE MUSCLE BIOPSY





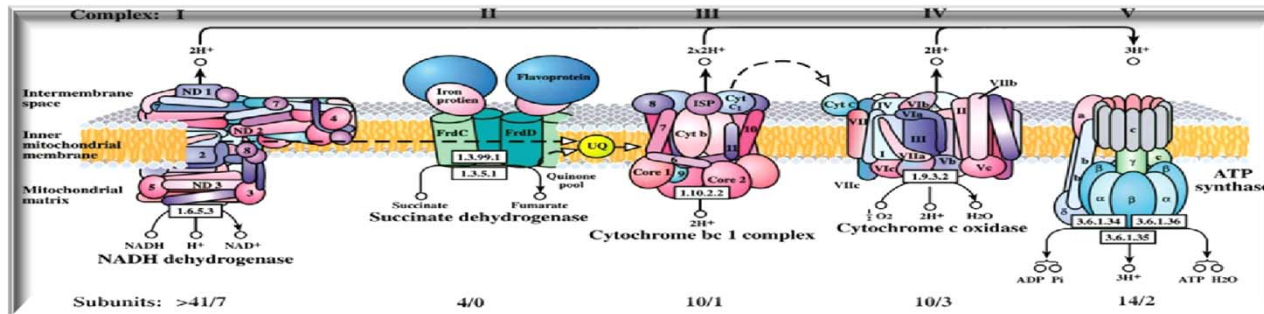




DB

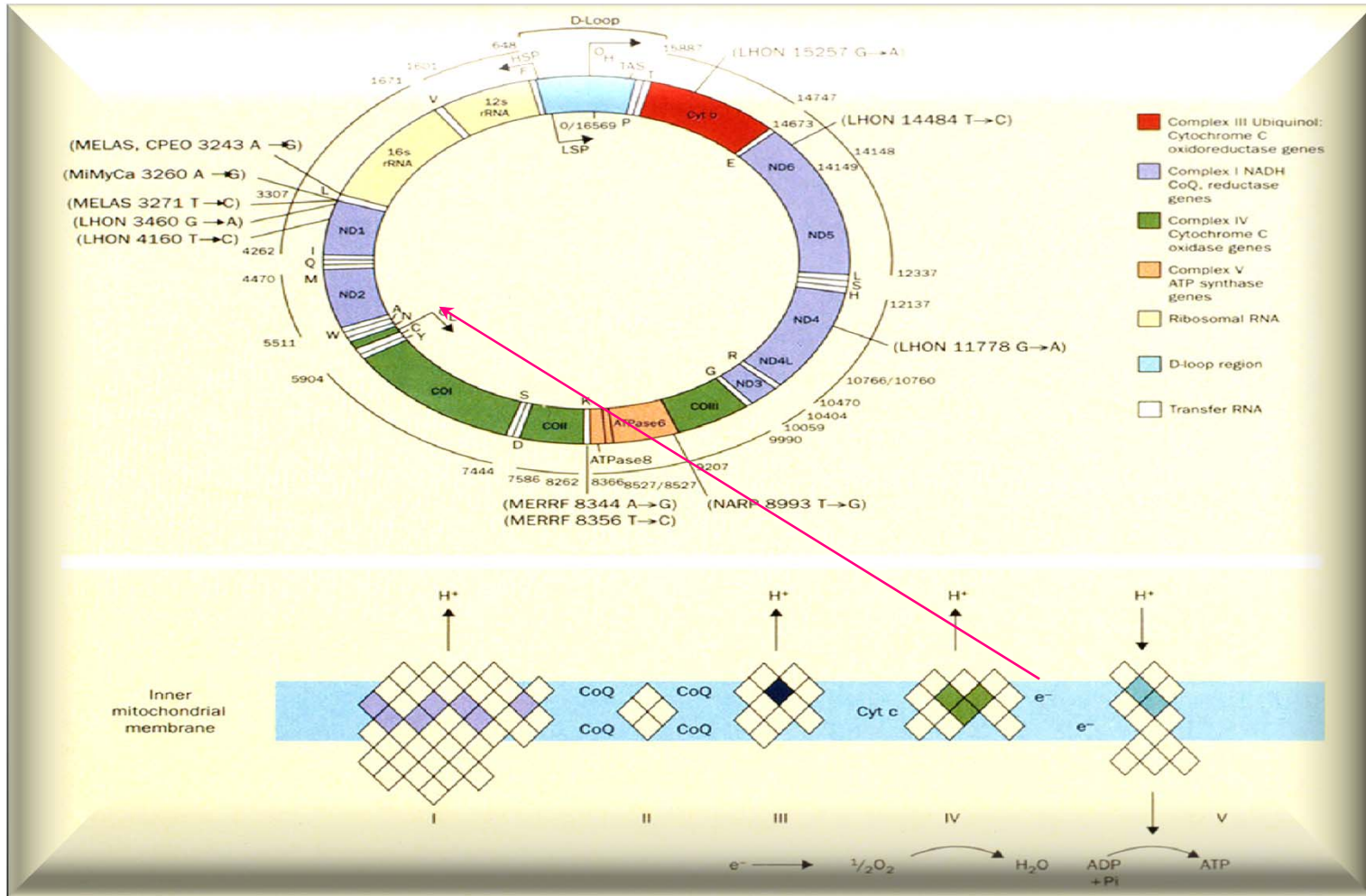
Activity ( $\mu\text{mol}/\text{min}/\text{g}$  wet weight)

ETC Complexes	Patient	Control	Prior Controls Mean $\pm$ SD N= 12	Range	
NADH-cytochr. c reductase - rotenone:		562.0	805.0 $\pm$ 112.8	( 639.0-915.0 )	L
NADH-cytochr. c reductase + rotenone:		555.9	324.0 $\pm$ 119.0	( 188.0-441.0 )	H
NADH-cytochr. c reductase rot. sens.:	I, III	6.1	481.0 $\pm$ 36.5	( 441.0-528.0 )	L
NADH-ferricyanide reductase	I	2180.5	1620.5 $\pm$ 363.8	( 1284.0-2131.0 )	H
Succinate-cytochrome c reductase:	II, III	59.2	146.4 $\pm$ 41.6	( 82.0-187.0 )	L
Succinate dehydrogenase:	II	177.2	74.5 $\pm$ 30.4	( 53.0-96.0 )	H
Decylubiquinol-cytochrome c reductase:	III	5049.0	4327.5 $\pm$ 415.1	( 4034.0-4621.0 )	H
Cytochrome c oxidase:	IV	38083.0	73307.4 $\pm$ 22667.2	( 38411.0-96774.0 )	L
Citrate Synthase:		2408.8	1820.3 $\pm$ 348.2	( 1338.0-2555.0 )	



Thanks to Charles Hoppel, MD; CIDEM





# Muscle Biopsy Concepts

- If you are going to do a muscle biopsy, do it right
- Myopathic Disorders often warrant a biopsy
- Although there is a role for genetic testing, whole exome is not going to replace the value of a muscle biopsy any time soon
- Common Errors
  - Not correlating pathological findings with biochemistry
  - Over-interpreting citrate synthase levels
  - Deriving answers with mathematical manipulation of data
  - Performing biochemical testing on tissue that has thawed or was not frozen properly



# Primary vs. Secondary Mitochondrial Disease

- Definition now a subject of hot debate for both scientific and political reasons
- Primary
  - those disorders directly affecting the electron transport chain and those disorders caused by pathogenic mutations in the mtDNA or respiratory chain encoded nDNA
    - \* Electron Transport Chain enzymology without confirmatory histologic data will not be accepted in most circumstances
- Secondary
  - those disorders that affect mitochondrial function by other mechanisms
    - \* indirect
    - \* mutations outside the exome
    - \* SNPs (disease modifying mutations)
  - complex I defects without other evidence, single mutations in most genes, drug toxicity

- Developmental Regression with lactic acidosis<sup>⊃⊂</sup> or elevated CSF lactate
- KSS phenotype (muscle better tissue than blood)
- LHON, NARP, MELAS, MERRF or Leigh phenotype
  - where screening for the common mutations is not informative
  - as an initial test
- Epilepsia Partialis Continua -Status Epilepticus-Refractory Seizures when POLG is normal
- Caudal-Cephalic MRI progression
- maternal inheritance pattern or similarly affected siblings
- Developmental Regression in the setting of prior normal development and non-dysmorphism
- > 3 objective signs in > 2 organ systems

⊃⊂ elevated alanine, alanine:lysine > 4, abnormal organic acids (CAC, 3-MG, lactate, pyruvate); note that lactate is often elevated in mutations involving tRNA but not the mtDNA mutations that encode for respiratory chain proteins

## When to do mtDNA sequencing?

# When to Consider *POLG*?

## Child

- Developmental Regression
- Epilepsia Partialis Continua -Status Epilepticus-Refractory Seizures
- Cephalic-Caudal MRI progression
- Valproate-induced liver toxicity
- Cortical Blindness
- Myoclonus
- Ataxia
- Neuropathy
- Liver Failure

## Adult

- PEO
- myopathy
- psychiatric illness
- Parkinsonism or EP movement
- ataxia
- dysarthria
- seizures
- DM
- ataxia - dysarthria
- neuropathy
- myoclonus
- dementia

- Strong story for mitochondrial disease with negative prior testing
- Strong story for neurogenetic disorder with a large differential
- Evidence on a muscle ETC enzyme test of an abnormality, but with normal mtDNA
  - Complex I nuclear genes and assembly genes
  - Complex IV nuclear genes and assembly genes

**When to Consider NextGen Mitochondrial Testing?**

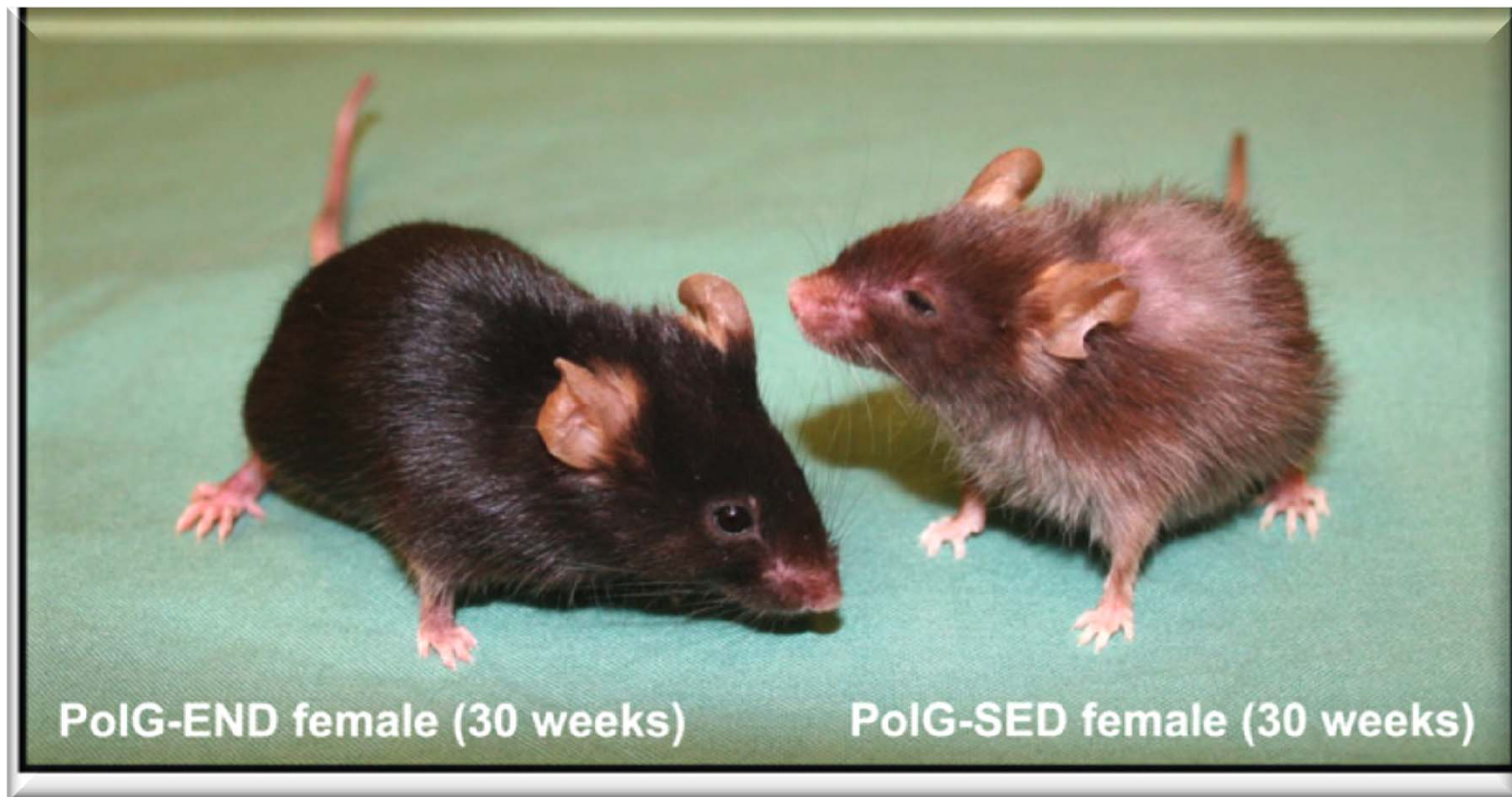
# ...but it comes down to treatment

- symptomatic and supportive care
- exercise
- supplements
- manipulating mitochondrial fusion, fission, expansion

## Of Mice and Men

Tarnopolsky, 2011  
PNAS

- POLG Mouse Model
- forced treadmill exercise three times per wk at 15 m/min for 45 min for a period of 5 months. A 5-min warm-up period and a 5-min cool-down period at 8 m/min were included.







# Vitamins - What Makes Sense (to me)

CoEnzyme Q10 5 - 20 mg/kg/day ÷ tid

L-Carnitine 30-100 mg/kg/day ÷ tid; 990 mg tid max

Riboflavin 100-600 mg/day qHS

<  Lipoic Acid 10 mg/kg/day ÷ bid

Creatine Monohydrate 100 mg/kg/day; 5 gms max

MELAS

L-Arginine 100-300 mg per kg per day  
L-Citrulline 100-300 mg per kg per day

Kearn-Sayre Syndrome ?  
Folinic Acid 5-50 mg a day



MAY 17 2006

# Take Home Messages

- 1:200 people harbor a pathogenic mutation in mtDNA
  - future generations
  - > 200 pathogenic mutations in the mtDNA
  - 1:5000 people have MELAS (A3243G) disease
- 1:10000 people have a fatal POLG disorder
  - 2% of people harbor one fatal POLG mutation
- there are ~ 1500 genes critical for mitochondrial function and clinical information is known for ~ 40 of them





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Diana  
DOB 6/20/1982  
DOD 9/4/1994





# Metabolic Medicine

## Our Knowledge is Only the Tip of the Iceberg



[www.genetests.com](http://www.genetests.com)

[www.omim.gov](http://www.omim.gov)