ESPGHAN
European Society for Paediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition

IMAGE OF THE MONTH

02/2021

FROM YOUNG ESPGHAN

Dirk Nielsen
Kinderklinik Klinikum Kassel
Kassel, Germany

Nutrition driven severe neurological disorder

A 14 months old boy with developmental delays, weakness and failure to thrive was initially admitted to the department of paediatric neurology. Neurodevelopment was normal during the first 10 months of life but then gradually declined. On admission, the boy was no longer able to sit, seemed unhappy and powerless, was disinterested and has lost appetite (Figure 1). A comprehensive neurologic examination including MRI of the head, nerve conduction velocity, and muscle biopsy was inconclusive.
The patient then received a gastroenterological work-up which revealed high levels of antibodies against tissue transglutaminase (IgA) and deaminated gliadin (IgG). The diagnosis of coeliac disease was confirmed histologically and the patient was started on a gluten-free diet. After only a few weeks, his condition improved and one year later his neurodevelopmental status was completely normal. (Figure 2).

Coeliac disease is an important differential diagnosis with a wide variation in clinical symptoms, particularly including neurological symptoms. Thus, any child with neurodevelopmental delay should be screened for coeliac disease.

Learn more about the medical management of coeliac disease in the ESPGHAN/NASPGHAN guidelines:
www.espghan.org/knowledge-center/publications/Clinical-Advice-Guides/2020_New_Guidelines_for_the_Diagnosis_of_Paediatric_Coeliac_Disease

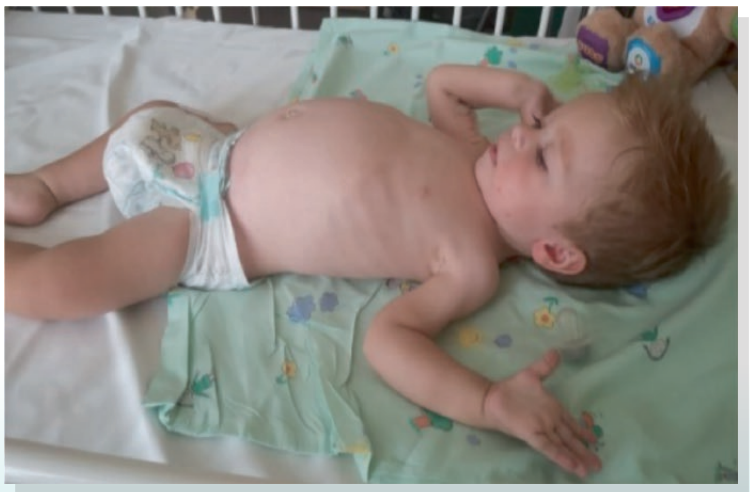

Figure 1

Figure 2