Reviewer’s report

Title: When battery exhaustion lets the lame walk: A case report on the importance of long-term stimulator monitoring in deep brain stimulation

Version: 2
Date: 17 March 2015

Reviewer: Bettina Debû

Reviewer’s report:

The authors report on the case of a Parkinson’s disease patient whose deleterious side effects of STN stimulation (worsening of axial motor functioning, i.e. speech and gait) went unnoticed until a battery defect. Deleterious effects of STN stimulation on speech and gait in some patients are well documented and can often be related to targeting issues. Such cases are usually diagnosed in DBS expert centers, where patients’ follow-up involves a thorough assessment under the four treatment conditions (OFF med / OFF stim; OFF med / ON stim, ON med / OFF stim and ON med / ON stim). Sub-optimal selection for surgery, implantation, or parameter settings can also be suspected based on the medication dose required to improve the patients’ symptoms above STN DBS. Thus, the case reported here is neither new nor exceptional. It illustrates patients’ management issues raised by the widespread performance of STN DBS in non-expert centers, including debatable selection criteria for surgery and lack of thorough follow-up of the patients after surgery (and possibly before surgery). It is indeed quite worrisome that the present patient’s dysarthria, at least, had not been related to STN DBS any earlier.

This case study will not bring any new information to experts in Parkinson’s disease or DBS. It might serve a didactical purpose for non-experts, but should then stress the issue of patients’ mismanagement as such.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests