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RESEARCH NOTE

Photoreceptor Degeneration in Experimental Transmissible Mink Encephalopathy of Hamsters

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Hamsters were inoculated intracerebrally with the agent of transmissible mink encephalopathy and developed clinical signs of encephalopathy. Photoreceptor degeneration occurred in all animals examined histologically. The changes were similar to those in scrapie, although less extensive. The findings suggest that either transmissible mink encephalopathy is a mink-adapted form of scrapie or, in rodents, photoreceptor degeneration is a characteristic of infection with agents of the spongiform encephalopathies. © 1987 Academic Press, Inc.

Experimental infection with the agents of scrapie or Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease results in retinal degeneration in hamsters (1, 2) and mice (6, 7). As part of our work describing the pathogenesis of scrapie retinopathy, we wanted to determine if photoreceptor degeneration also occurred in transmissible mink encephalopathy (TME), a disease of mink similar to scrapie.

Abbreviation: TME—transmissible mink encephalopathy.

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