Letters to the Editor

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Audiologic Involvement in Systemic Sclerosis

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Neurological involvement has been occasionally described in systemic sclerosis [1–3]. During a study of esophageal function in a group of 22 women affected with systemic sclerosis, some patients complained of auditive impairment so that we decided to subject the whole group to otologic and audiometric examinations.

Audiological changes have been found in 13 cases (59%). 7 patients showed slight bilateral sensorineural hypoacusia. The ages of these women ranged from 51 to 75 years (average 63 years). 3 patients had slight mono-lateral sensorineural hypoacusia and their ages ranged from 31 to 59 years (average 47 years). The anamnesis of these 10 patients was negative for previous consumption of ototoxic drugs or prolonged exposition to noise. All these patients but 1 had high titers of ANA on repeated examinations. The auditive impairment of these 10 women was slight but, in our opinion, it was not caused only by age. In the other 3 patients, we observed an important impairment of the auditive function: in 2 out of these 3 cases, a sensorineural involvement was found in addition to transmission hypoacusia, while in the other patient there was only severe bilateral sensorineural hypoacusia. The ages of these 3 women ranged from 37 to 57 years (average 49 years) and all of them exhibited high ANA titers.

To our knowledge, hypoacusia has never been reported in patients with systemic sclerosis. We found hypoacusia in 59% of the patients we studied and in all these cases, sensorineural hypoacusia apparently not re-

lated with age or drug consumption or noise was present.

Although more sophisticated investigations of the auditive function are necessary to better explain this change, we think that our report deserves to be discussed.

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