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Differential diagnosis of CNS demyelinating disease

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Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a well known demyelinating disorder of the central nervous system (CNS). However, there is no definitive diagnostic test. Instead, diagnosis of MS predominantly depends on clinical criteria, supported by paraclinical investigations including MRI of the brain and spinal cord, in the absence of an alternative explanation for underlying neurologic deficits. Several CNS demyelinating disorders may be challenging to distinguish from MS, especially during initial presentation. Especially, acute disseminated encephalomyelitis, neuromyelitis optica, and idiopathic transverse myelitis may resemble MS, delaying prompt and accurate diagnosis. Sjögren's syndrome, systemic lupus erythematosus, Behçet's disease, and primary CNS vasculitis may also mimic MS. The clinical features, diagnosis, pathology, and treatment of these other CNS demyelinating disorders will be discussed.

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