

A Definition of Gout: *an exercise in S/V agreement*

KEY

Highlighted areas show where corrections have been made

Gout is a disease resulting from the deposition of urate crystals caused by the overproduction or underexcretion of uric acid. The disease is often, but not always, associated with elevated serum uric acid levels. Although the prevalence of gout **is** equal in men and women, men are six times more likely to have elevated serum uric acid concentrations. The condition is uncommon before the age of 30. Understanding more about the causes, symptoms, and methods of diagnosis of gout **is** important for both patients and their care providers.

Hyperuricemia, defined as a serum uric acid concentration above 7 mg, **has** many **causes**. Serum uric acid levels **become** elevated in any disorder that **results** in the proliferation of cells or the excessive turnover of nucleoproteins. Hyperuricemia can also **occur** with decreased renal function and in genetic disorders that **increase** the production of uric acid. Several medications can also **increase** the serum uric acid concentration. Although hyperuricemia is a risk factor for the development of gout, the exact relationship between hyperuricemia and gout **is** unclear. Other risk factors are alcohol consumption and obesity.

Symptoms of gout are most obvious during attacks, which **tend** to occur suddenly, without any obvious causes. The chief complaint associated with an acute attack of gout **is** agonizing pain accompanied by swelling, warmth and tenderness. Attacks usually start during the night, when moderate pain in the joints **is** first noticed. The pain **becomes** persistently worse and has a continuous, gnawing quality. A low-grade fever may **occur** in connection with the inflammation. More than 75% of acute gout attacks **affect** a joint in the lower extremities, and podagra, an acute attack of gout in the big toe, **accounts** for over 50% of all acute attacks. In addition to the great toe, **other** areas affected **include** the insteps, heels, ankles, knees, fingers, wrists and elbows.

Diagnosis of the condition **involves** various tests. Because the gout patient typically **has** hypertension and impaired renal function, examination of the renal and cardiovascular systems **is** essential. Baseline laboratory tests **include** a complete blood cell count and urinalysis, as well as serum creatinine, blood urea nitrogen and serum uric acid measurements. The most reliable test, however, involves detecting uric acid crystals in a sample of joint fluid obtained by joint aspiration, or arthrocentesis.