

Refeeding syndrome presenting as Guillain-Barre:

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This is a case report of a 42 year old Afro-Caribbean lady who presented with acute onset of paraesthesia, weakness of limbs, bulbar symptoms and respiratory insufficiency following an episode of diarrhoea. A provisional diagnosis of Guillain-Barre syndrome was made and she needed intubation and ventilatory support to protect her airway and maintain oxygenation. She was found to have severe hypophosphatemia and hypokalemia which were corrected in the ITU. She was extubated within 5 days and she made a complete neurological recovery within 2 weeks. The vital piece of history that she was fasting for 40 days prior to the onset of symptoms was obtained only after she was extubated. The history of symptoms starting within 4 days of starting to eat again and the lab evidence of severe hypophosphatemia points the diagnosis towards refeeding syndrome. Recovery within 2 weeks of onset is unusual with Guillain-Barre. Though severe hypophosphatemia is associated with a variety of neurological manifestations, there are only few published reports of it presenting as Guillain Barre and ours is another one. Prompt supportive treatment and full correction of electrolyte imbalance helped our patient to make a complete recovery.