

QUESTION

10. A patient with a long history of alcohol abuse is brought to the emergency department with a 2-day history of confusion and vomiting. The patient is found to have a serum sodium of 118 mEq/L. The patient is most likely to have which of the following findings?

- A) Apathy
 - B) Asterixis
 - C) Anisocoria
 - D) Anisocorneal reflex
 - E) Anisocoric light reflex
- 

ANSWER: B
Asterixis is a clinical sign of hepatic encephalopathy, which is a common complication of chronic alcohol abuse. The patient's history of alcohol abuse and the presence of confusion and vomiting are consistent with hepatic encephalopathy. The patient's serum sodium level is low, which is also consistent with this condition. Asterixis is characterized by a hand-drawn diagram of a human head in profile, showing the brain and the location of the optic chiasm. The optic chiasm is labeled with a red 'X' and a red arrow pointing to it from the text 'Anisocoric light reflex'.

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