

# ELSBERG SYNDROME BY HERPES SIMPLEX 1 REACTIVATION: CASE REPORT

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## Background

Elsberg Syndrome (ES) is a rare condition, described as an acute or subacute lumbosacral radiculitis, often associated with viral infections such as HSV-2, accounting for 5-10% of cases of cauda equina syndrome.

## Case report

This case describes a 54-year-old woman with acute low back pain, progressive weakness of the right lower limb, sensory alteration and urinary complaints, preceded by labial herpetic vesicles. Neurological examination revealed motor deficit, hypostasis, abolished reflexes and signs suggestive of radicular involvement. CT of the spine was normal, but lumbar puncture showed pleocytosis and CSF PCR confirmed HSV-1 infection. MRI showed enhancement of the lumbar nerve roots and EMG revealed sensitivomotor polyradiculopathy of L3-S1 on the right. The patient was treated with intravenous acyclovir for 21 days, with early rehabilitation. At the MFR follow-up appointment, 17 days after discharge, she had improved strength, symmetrical sensitivity, normal bladder function and no incontinence. She continued with outpatient rehabilitation and returned to work, despite residual motor deficits.

## Conclusion

This case highlights the importance of early diagnosis of ES, even in the absence of active skin lesions or a clear viral history. Detection of HSV-1 in the CSF confirmed the etiology, although treatment can be started empirically. The prognosis depends on the initial severity and therapeutic response, and early initiation of antiviral treatment and rehabilitation is essential. Delayed diagnosis can lead to prolonged bladder dysfunction and persistent neurological deficits.

**Keywords:** Síndrome de Elsberg, Herpes Simples