

Original article:

Depression among Sudanese epileptic patients

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Abstract:

Background: Epilepsy is a serious medical problem with deleterious psychological consequences. No data available about depression among patients with Epilepsy in Sudan.

Objectives: We aimed to study the prevalence of depression among patients with Epilepsy in Sudan, and to assess the severity of depression among those patients.

Methods: 100 patients with epilepsy and 100 controlled individuals at Elgadarif medical wards were conducted, during the period from May to December 2011. Participants were invited to sign an informed written consent then responded to a structured questionnaire based on Beck Depression Inventory a well validated 21 components scale with total aggregate of 71, with, 10 -15 stands for mild depression, 16 - 23, 24 - 36, and more than 37 stands for moderate, severe, and profound depression respectively.

Observations and results: There were 200 subjects, their ages ranged from 18 – 70 years. (45.5%) of the sample was depressed. Mild, moderate, and severe depression was reported in 31.5%, 12%, and 2% respectively.

Conclusion: Depression was common among Epileptic patients in this sample. These results support the need to implement better measures for early detection and management of depression among Epilepsy, as well as elevating awareness of the primary care health providers and physicians about comorbid mood disorders and Epilepsy.

Keywords: Depression; Epilepsy, Sudan

Introduction:

Epilepsy is a group of disorders, which are organic in origin. Abnormal neuronal discharge that occurs in epilepsy may affect mood, behavior, and thinking that represent abnormal symptoms in epilepsy, which called functional disorders.¹

Depression is one of the commonest psychiatric disorders. Most of the patients often present in primary care settings rather than to a psychiatrist. A major proportion remains undetected leading to chronicity and disability. It is a major public health problem and has been identified as a leading cause of disability in the recent World Health Organization —World Bank study of Global Burden of Disease.²

Depression is characterized by depressed mood, loss of effort, anhedonia, and loss of appetite, feeling of guilt, and suicide ideation or attempts.³

Depression is the most common of psychiatric comorbidity among epileptic patients. In the present study, we aim to investigate the relation between, epilepsy, and depression, and to assess its severity.

Aims and objectives:

In the current study, we aim to screen and detect Sudanese epileptic patients who were admitted in the medical wards in Elgagarif Teaching Hospital for depression during the period May to December 2011. We also targeted to assess the severity of depression among those epileptic patients.

Material & methods:

The present study was a case controlled study, which was enrolled at medical wards in Elgadarif Teaching Hospital -Sudan during the period May – December 2011. There were two medical wards in this hospital, one for male and the other for female patients. They were constituted for about 50 patients.

100 epileptic patients and 100 controlled individuals were involved in this study, subjects responded to an Arabic version of the Beck Depression Inventory, a well-validated scale to assess depression. The Beck Depression Inventory has 21 items measuring various aspects of depression symptomatology, each item scores from 0-4 depending on severity, with, 10-16 stands for mild depression, and 17-30, and > 30, stands for

moderate and severe depression respectively.⁴ The chief investigator collected the required data and the Soft Wire Statistical Package (SSPS) was used for data analysis with P<0.05 regarded as statistically significant.

Observations & results:

100 epileptic patients and 100 controlled were included, their ages ranged from 18-70 years. (64.5%) were males, and (35.5%) were females. (81.5%) of the sample were valid married, while (16%) were single, (0.5%) were separated, and 2% were widowers.

(45.5%) of the sample was depressed, mild depression was found in (31.5%) while (12%) were moderately depressed, and (2%) were severely depressed.

Table (1), shows age groups among the study group:

Age group (years)	No%
18 - 25	5 (5 %)
26 - 35	20(20%)
36 - 45	30.5(30.5%)
46 - 55	27.5(27.5%)
56 - 65	13.5(13.5%)
66 - 70	3.5(3.5%)
Total	100(100%)

Table (2), shows patient’s characteristics:

Character	No %
Marital status	
single	16%
Valid married	81.5%
Separated	0.5%
Widowed	2%
sex	
Male	64.5%
Female	35.5%

Table (3), depicted the prevalence of depression among study group

Degree of depression	No%
Mild	31.5%
Moderate	12%
Severe	2%
Total	45.5%

Discussion:

The current study illustrated that, male are affected more than female. It is a fact that epilepsy does affect both genders, males are more affected than females, although the explanation for this is unknown, but there are some risk factors, such as trauma and stigmatization of epilepsy in our country Sudan are more common in men than women are. Some medical conditions have a high liability of causing depression (e.g., brain tumors, thyroid disorders) ⁵. Although the incidence of depression more common among patients with epilepsy, little evidence explain the causal relations. New information is developing is the role frontal lobe localization for mood disorders.⁶

Though the high numbers of anticonvulsants that available, to abort the seizures completely remains the exact task for many patients who are suffering from epilepsy and for the physicians who are treating them. Psychiatric disorders mostly mood

disorders and cognitive disorders are higher in epileptic patients than general populations^{7,8}

The results of the current sample emphasizes on the assumption that patients with seizure disorder are with high risk to major depressive disorder. High rates of comorbidity may be due to shared pathophysiological mechanism between depression and epilepsy. In addition, iatrogenic, genetic, and psychosocial factors may share to the finding.⁹

Conclusion:

This study highlights the relationship between epilepsy and depression. The pervasive influence of depression on reports of seizure activity suggest that epileptic patients should be investigated and treated for depression.

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