

TREATMENT OF EPILEPSY WITH LIMITED RESOURCES

A community-based intervention project on epilepsy in six rural areas of China

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In order to develop and test a model on treatment people with convulsive forms of epilepsy at primary health level in rural areas of China, a demonstration project supported by WHO has been carried out in 6 provinces in China Since 2001.

By the end of 2003, a total of 2,261 patients with generalized tonic-clonic seizures in 6 rural areas from 3,185,000 population were screened and entered the treatment trial. The patients were managed by rural physicians who were trained in the structured method of treatment using phenobarbital.

The result of observations in 24 mouths

revealed that over 65% of the patients obtained good response as compared to the 6 months period prior to entering the treatment trial. About 40% of the patients were seizure-free after receiving treatment, and no serious side effects were seen.

This study confirmed that the protocol “Epilepsy management at primary health level” was suitable in rural areas of China. With training, the rural physicians could successfully use the structured method to treat epilepsy using phenobarbital. About two-thirds of the patients with convulsive forms of epilepsy could benefit from this treatment method.