

## **Progress of the demonstration project in China**

Jianzhong WU

*Beijing Association Against Epilepsy, China Oasi Center for Epilepsy, Beijing, China*

This demonstration project is carried out under the auspices of the Global Campaign Against Epilepsy. The projects include epidemiological survey, intervention study and educational program in 5 provinces covering 2.5 million population.

A door-to-door screening questionnaire was carried out amongst 55,000 people. The lifetime prevalence of epilepsy was 7.0/1,000, with the prevalence of active epilepsy being 4.6/1,000. Sixty three percent of people with active epilepsy did not receive antiepileptic drugs in the previous week.<sup>1</sup>

Intervention study was started in the end of 2001. Primary health care physicians in the study area received compulsory training according to the project manual. They used a diagnostic questionnaire to screen for patients with convulsive epilepsy. The local supervising physicians examined the patients and decided whether to include the patients in the intervention study. The patients were treated with oral phenobarbital. Patients included in the study were

follow up every two weeks for the first two months and monthly thereafter. The follow up was for dose adjustments, to check compliance and provide the medication. Seizure numbers and side effects from phenobarbital were also recorded. A total of 2,661 patients with convulsive epilepsy received were included in the study. Among the 1,544 patients who completed 12 months follow up, 36% patients had no seizures. Among the 1,325 patients who completed 24 months follow up, 66% had >50% seizure reduction, including 40% who were seizure free.

The demonstration project shows that convulsive epilepsy can be treated in the rural area of a developing country effectively and at low cost. It has given patients hope and confidence of living. It could bring more patients with epilepsy "out of the shadows".

### **REFERENCE**

1. Wang WZ, Wu JZ, Wang DS, et al. The prevalence and treatment gap in epilepsy in China. *Neurology* 2003; 60: 1544-5.