

Prevalence of depression and its effect on quality of life in patients with epilepsy: A community based study and a comprehensive rural epilepsy study in South India (CRESSI)

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Background and Objective: Depression is a common co-morbidity in patients with epilepsy and the reported frequency varies between 10 to 60%. Quality of life (QoL) of people with epilepsy is significantly affected by associated depression. There is a dearth of community-based studies on the frequency of depression in people with epilepsy and its effect on QoL in developing countries.

Methods: Prevalence of epilepsy was studied in 22 villages, geographically clustered in one region of the West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh, a province in South India, by a door-to-door survey. After clinical investigation, the patients with epilepsy were administered the Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview (MINI Plus) to determine the associated psychiatric co-morbidity, and severity of depression. The effect of associated depression on the QoL of patients with epilepsy (18-60 years) was also determined using QOLIE-89.

Results: The total number of individuals identified with epilepsy was 450. Among them, depression was a common psychiatric co-morbidity and was present in 73 (16%) individuals. Of these, 9 (12%) had mild depressive episodes, 29 (40%) had moderate depressive episodes, 5 (6%) had severe depressive episodes, and 25 (34%) had dysthymia. Six (8%) individuals had an adjustment disorder; a brief depressive reaction. About 60% of individuals with depression had a poor quality of life.

Conclusion: This community based study in rural India shows a significant number of people with epilepsy suffering depression which interferes with their quality of life.