

Reply to response to article by Kheng Seang Lim *et al.* in Neurology Asia 2013; 18(4): 361-368.

We would like to thank Professor Gretchen Birbeck for pointing out how different aspect of knowledge determined the attitudes towards epilepsy in different groups, such as the clerics, teachers and police officers, using the results from the Zambia-based research group.¹ We agreed that the statement of “None of the studies employed quantitative scales correlating the knowledge and attitudes toward epilepsy” in our original paper² was stated incorrectly, as evidenced in the quoted papers from Zambia that the knowledge and attitudes toward epilepsy were scored and correlated quantitatively.

The term “knowledge” in epilepsy studies was mostly used to describe the public perception of the illness including the perception of what epilepsy is and what the cause of epilepsy is, and only in a few study that “knowledge” was used to determine the degree of the public’s medical knowledge e.g. Epilepsy Knowledge Questionnaire (EKQ). It was proven that the perception of epilepsy affected the attitudes toward epilepsy, but how the degree of medical knowledge affects the attitudes is uncertain. In studies using PATE scale, public with higher education level was not shown to have better personal attitudes toward epilepsy.³ The design of our study therefore focused on a different dimension of knowledge in epilepsy, i.e. the medical knowledge, in related to the attitudes toward epilepsy, which was not studied before according to our literature review. Therefore, the statement of “None of the ... attitudes toward epilepsy” can be restated as “None of the studies employed quantitative scales correlating the medical knowledge and attitudes toward epilepsy”.

We also appreciated the last comment by Birbeck¹, i.e. “We certainly agree that only certain aspects of knowledge have an impact, but this aspect is not likely homogenous across a population.” There should be greater efforts to understand the impact of specific knowledge on the attitudes toward epilepsy in different populations and cultures.

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