Identification of ADHD in youth with epilepsy.

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Abstract

PURPOSE:
To further characterize Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in a clinic-referred sample of youth with epilepsy.

METHODS:
Children and adolescents with epilepsy who were referred for comprehensive neuropsychological evaluation comprised the sample. Data were obtained via archival record review. Youth with epilepsy were grouped according to ADHD diagnosis (no ADHD, ADHD - Combined Type, and ADHD - Predominantly Inattentive Type) and compared for a number of neurocognitive variables, seizure-related variables, and parent and teacher completed behavior rating scale variables. Data was examined via analysis of variance and logistic regression models with post hoc pairwise comparisons, employing Tukey procedure where appropriate.

RESULTS:
Youth in this clinical case series (N = 204) demonstrated a high rate of ADHD diagnosis. ADHD - Combined Type was identified with slightly greater frequency than ADHD - Predominantly Inattentive Type. Age of seizure onset, seizure classification, and seizure frequency did not differ significantly between the groups. The groups also did not differ on most cognitive variables examined. Significant group differences were found for parent and teacher completed behavior rating scales assessing inattention, hyperactivity, and executive dysfunction.

CONCLUSION:
Screening for ADHD in youth with epilepsy is important as these symptoms can significantly interfere with rehabilitative efforts. Behavior rating scales may be the most efficient and cost effective way to identify ADHD in youth with epilepsy.