

1. ABSTRACT

Background- The high prevalence rates of depression and self harm behaviors among patients with epilepsy had been shown by many previous studies. The previous studies also indicated increased level of disability among patients with co-morbid depression and epilepsy. There were no documented studies done in Sri Lanka to explore the prevalence rates of depression and self harm behaviors among patients with epilepsy. Therefore we decided to study the prevalence rates of depression and self harm behaviors in patients with epilepsy in Sri- Lanka.

Method- A cross sectional descriptive study was done. The data was collected during the period of April 2012 to November 2013. The data were collected from the patients attending epilepsy clinic, Teaching Hospital Kandy. Data for the control sample were collected from the individuals accompanying patients to the outpatient clinics in Teaching Hospital Kandy. Systematic sampling method was used to select subjects in both study and control samples. The socio demographic data were collected by an interviewer administered questionnaire. Screening for depression was done by using self administered questionnaire (Peradeniya Depression Scale-PDS). The individuals who scored 10 or more in PDS were considered positive for depression and examined by the principal investigator using Structured Clinical Interview for Depression – I (SCID-I) for the conformation of depression.

Results – The study sample consisted of three hundred and two subjects (n=302). There were hundred and sixty five (165) male participants and hundred and thirty seven (137) female participants. The mean age of the sample was 38.5 (95% CL 37.03-39.97) years with a range from 18 to 71 years. The sample had standard deviation of 13.03 years. The control sample consisted of two hundred and seventy nine (279) subjects. One hundred and ninety eight (198) age and sex matched couples were yielded for comparisons. The prevalence rate of depression among epileptic patients was found to be 25.8%. There was no statistically

significant difference between prevalence rates of male and female subjects with epilepsy. The age and sex matched case and control samples indicated prevalence rates of depression as 27.5% and 15.7% respectively with statistically significant difference. The prevalence rate of history of self harm behaviours among matched case and control samples were found to be 9.6% and 8.1% respectively. There was no statistically significant difference between the prevalence rates. There was a significant positive association between frequency of seizures and prevalence rate of depression. There was a significant negative association between prevalence rate of depression and level of education among female participants in both case and control groups.

The severity of depression had a statistically significant positive correlation with self rated interferences with household activities and self rated interferences with recreational activities. There was no statistically significant correlation detected between seizure frequency and the indicators of household and social functioning among depressed patients.

Conclusion – The prevalence of depression among patients with epilepsy attending epilepsy clinic Teaching Hospital Kandy was 25.8%. The patient population had a significantly high prevalence rate of depression when compared with age and sex matched control sample. The prevalence rate of deliberate self harm (DSH) among patients with epilepsy was 10.9%. There was no significant difference between prevalence rates of DSH between patients with epilepsy and the control sample.

2. INTRODUCTION

Epilepsy is not an uncommon condition among the general population. Approximately 5% of the population have a fit of some sort during their life time¹. On the other hand psychiatric disabilities are more common among patients with epilepsy than in the general population