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Risk factors in Psychiatric comorbidity of Epilepsy: Prospective study two years after Epilepsy onset

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Scientific literature shows high rates of psychopathology in paediatric patients with epilepsy, high prevalence of anxiety-depressive disorder, thought disorders, along with attention and social issues. Most studies suggest a common etiopathogenesis of epilepsy and psychopathology. Therefore, clinical assessment with these patients should take into account both psychological and neurological aspects. This research aims to find a relation between the onset of epilepsy and the development of any psychopathology in children accessing the Italian NHS after the first seizure. For 2 years 49 children (aged 4-18) with new-onset epilepsy, and their families underwent a semestral clinical assessment including clinical interview, dimensional and categorical questionnaires. The study analysed the demographic, psychosocial and epileptic profile, monitoring their natural evolution and involvement in a potential psychiatric co-morbidity. Consistently with the literature, we found a high prevalence of anxiety-depressive disorder and ADHD, both significantly associated with psychosocial, epilepsy-related, and quality of life variables. Although the results have shown a general improvement of the diagnosed psychopathology, it was also observed an enlargement of the psychopathological spectrum, and an impairment of skills after one year. After 18 months the 90% of patients reduced seizure frequency and duration, maintaining the psychiatric scores. The 43% was recommended to a specific psycho-diagnostic procedure, refused by 14%. Although agreeing with the hypothesis of a common neurobiological damage causing epilepsy and psychopathology, the role of psychological factors, environmental characteristics and stressful life events cannot be excluded. Therefore, a global care and a multidisciplinary diagnosis considering an eventual psychopathological profile are necessary.

Biography

Manuela Stucchi is a Trained Clinical Psychologist. She graduated at University of Padova (Italy) in 2009 with highest final grade and will finish her training in psychodynamic psychotherapy in late 2015. She collaborates with the Child and Adolescent Neuropsychiatric Unit in Padova (Italy) till 2010 as a Clinical Psychologist. She has co-conducted projects with Gatta and her research group for alcohol prevention in school. She has published in reputed journals regarding her work with epilepsy and psychopathology and other projects. She presented her works in several national and international conferences.

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