Psychiatric Aspects of Epilepsy in Adults

Course content
The course will cover the fundamental aspects of the most frequent psychiatric comorbidities of Adults with Epilepsy. The course material will focus on Depressive, Anxiety, and Psychotic Disorders in adults with epilepsy. Intellectual disabilities and Psychogenic Non-Epileptic Seizures (PNES) are also covered. Special attention will be given to epidemiologic aspects of each disorder, their particular clinical expressions in epilepsy patients and strategies to identify them in a neurology clinic. In addition, the course will provide a very practical review of the use of psychotropic drugs in patients with epilepsy, their impact on seizures, and the pharmacodynamic and pharmacokinetic interaction with antiepileptic drugs.

The course will include examples of common neurobiologic pathogenic mechanisms operant in epilepsy and depressive, anxiety and psychotic and attention deficit disorders that explain the relatively high comorbidity of some of these disorders in patients with epilepsy and their bidirectional relation with epilepsy.

The course will discuss the impact that each condition has on the quality of life of patients and the course of the seizure disorder, as well as the impact that the seizure disorder and its treatment (pharmacologic and surgical) has on the course of these psychiatric comorbidities. Clinical cases will be presented to illustrate the common clinical presentations of each condition as well as the unique clinical manifestations of some of these comorbidities in patients with epilepsy.

The course on Psychiatric Aspects of Epilepsy in Adults will therefore be divided in six Units dedicated to an initial review of epidemiologic aspects of these psychiatric disorders in epilepsy, their bidirectional relation with epilepsy and the negative impact that a lifetime psychiatric history has on the pharmacologic and surgical response to treatment of the seizure disorder. This will be follow by a comprehensive review of psychotic, depressive and anxiety Disorders in adults with epilepsy. The last two Units will be dedicated to two peculiar problems, namely the Non-epileptic attack disorder and the spectrum of intellectual disabilities in adults with epilepsy.

Course units
Biological basis of psychiatric disorders in epilepsy; Psychotic disorders; Mood disorders; Anxiety Disorders; Non Epileptic Attack Disorder; Intellectual disabilities.

Learning objectives
The main aim of the course is “What every neurologist should know about psychiatric disorders in epilepsy”. The course will provide epileptologists and neurologists with a special interest in epilepsy an understanding of the importance of identifying and facilitating treatment of the most frequent psychiatric comorbidities in adults with epilepsy. Moreover, it will improve their competence and confidence in the differential diagnosis and treatment of psychiatric comorbidities in adults with epilepsy.

VIREPA - Course announcement: Psychiatric Aspects of Epilepsy in Adults – 2014/2015
Target group & entry criteria
The course will be pragmatic and aimed at the epileptologist but also the general neurologist with a special interest in epilepsy. In selected situations, Specialist Epilepsy Nurses, Psychologists, Psychiatrists or Neuropsychiatrists dealing with epilepsy care could be considered.

- Signed confirmation of the neurology department of 3 years of neurological or comparable training (clinical neurophysiology, neurosurgery, or combinations of these). Neuropsychologists, Psychiatrists or Neuropsychiatrists with equivalent professional experience in the field of epileptology will also be able to attend the course. Equivalent professional experience is required for Specialist Epilepsy Nurses.
- CV - Please submit in English only.
- List of publications (if applicable and in English only)

Course format
The course is divided into units, beginning with an introduction to the VIREPA e-learning platform, followed by 6 learning units of 3 weeks each and a Final Task. The learning material (textbooks and references) is available for download. To earn credits in each learning unit, tasks (like the presentation of own clinical cases) will be successfully completed within an active online communication process among all participants, guided by the experts in the discussion fora on the e-learning platform. These tasks help to deepen the theoretically gained knowledge from the learning material and enable the participant to transfer this knowledge to his/her clinical practice.

The participants are expected to spend about 8 hours per unit (~2.5-3 hours/week) for individual study of the learning material, for reading/writing contributions in the forum and for the completion of the tasks.

All tutors are currently practicing in their respective specialty field, moderating the distance courses in addition to their regular duties. This gives participants the unique opportunity to draw upon their expertise and practical experience even beyond the mere requirements of the course.

Course fee: $945. A restricted number of bursaries will be available. For participants living in countries with “low” and “lower middle” income, self payment for approved bursaries will be $235. (See categories according to the statistics of the World Bank: [http://www.ilae.org/Visitors/Centre/documents/WorldbankListEconomies.pdf](http://www.ilae.org/Visitors/Centre/documents/WorldbankListEconomies.pdf))

Important for bursary applicants:

1 a) Submission of a letter of recommendation from the bursary applicant’s current workplace or from the leadership of the local ILAE Chapter or Regional Commission stating the expected benefit to the epilepsy care and development in the bursary applicant’s community specific to the VIREPA course for which application is being made.

1 b) In case such evidence cannot be submitted, a personal letter of motivation is required outlining the benefit the bursary candidate expects from his/her daily practice and professional career specific to the VIREPA course for which application is being made.
Please note that this requirement is mandatory and is an important part of the decision-making process for the granting of any bursary.

It is also wise to note that dropping out of a course or having limited participation in one, may impact future decisions about bursary eligibility.

**Number of participants**: up to 30

**Course Directors**
Prof. Andres M. Kanner and Prof. Marco Mula

For questions, please contact ILAE VIREPA staff at courses@ilae.org.