

Disabling Epilepsy

Definition

Disabling epilepsy is predominantly characterized by recurrent seizures associated with considerable medical and psychosocial co-morbidity.

Epilepsy can be disabling due to:

- Intractable seizures with a poor response to medical treatment.
- Treatment barriers: availability, accessibility, affordability, and acceptability of AEDs.
- Burden of medical co-morbidity.
- Psychological and psychiatric co-morbidity that accompanies epilepsy, (depression, anxiety and even psychosis being commoner in PWE)
- The stigma and adversity of epilepsy

The medical practitioner is best positioned to address these factors. He/ she may seek help of the following:

- A specialist in optimising AED prescription.
- A social worker, local epilepsy support group or the local chapter of the Indian Epilepsy Association (IEA) in securing for the PWE appropriate social assistance.
- A psychologist or counsellor to tackle emotional and behavioural problems.
- A physical and/or occupational therapist to tackle physical disabilities and limitations.
- The specialist physician to tackle medical co-morbidity.

Action Point

- Referral to a comprehensive epilepsy care centre may be necessary.
- If such centre is not available, refer to specialised services.
- Continue routine care.