



International Journal of Homoeopathic Sciences

E-ISSN: 2616-4493

P-ISSN: 2616-4485

www.homoeopathicjournal.com

IJHS 2020; 4(4): 23-27

Received: 18-07-2020

Accepted: 22-08-2020

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Epilepsy and its management with homoeopathy

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Abstract

Epilepsy is the most common neurological condition. It is estimated that about 7-8% of population experiences at least 1 episode of epileptic seizure in their lifetime. Every homoeopath get case of epilepsy once in their practice. So, this article reviews about the introduction, general management and homoeopathic management of epilepsy. Homoeopathic therapeutics includes well known or frequently used medicines as well as rare or less used homoeopathic medicines.

Keywords: Epilepsy, homoeopathy

1. Introduction

Seizure is a paroxysmal event due to abnormal excessive or synchronous neuronal activity in the brain. Epilepsy is diagnosed when there are recurrent seizures due to a chronic, underlying process^[1].

A single seizure is not epilepsy but is an indication for investigation to be done. The recurrence rate after a first seizure is about 70% within the first year and most recurrent attacks occur within a month or two of the first^[2].

2. Prevalence: The annual incidence of new cases of epilepsy after infancy is 20–70/100000. The prevalence in developing countries is up to five times higher than in developed countries^[2].

3. Causes of seizure^[1, 2].

- Sleep deprivation
- Alcohol (particularly withdrawal)
- Recreational drug misuse
- Physical and mental exhaustion
- Flickering lights, including TV and computer screens (primary generalised epilepsies only)
- Intercurrent infections (Acute CNS infection) and metabolic disturbances like hypoglycemia, hypocalcemia, hypomagnesemia, pyridoxine deficiency, uremia, hepatic failure, electrolyte abnormalities),
- Uncommonly: loud noises, music, reading, hot baths
- Trauma, Genetic disorders.

4. Classification of seizure^[1].

4.1 Focal seizures

(Can be further described as having motor, sensory, autonomic, cognitive, or other features)

4.2 Generalized seizures

- a. Absence Typical Atypical
- b. Tonic clonic
- c. Clonic
- d. Tonic
- e. Atonic
- f. Myoclonic

4.3 May be focal, generalized, or unclear: Epileptic spasms

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Generalized seizures		
[Involve networks distributed across both hemispheres.it may occur as a primary disorder or result from secondary generalization of a focal seizure.]		
Tonic-clonic seizures (grand mal)	Absence seizures (petit mal)	Atonic seizures
There is sudden loss of consciousness, loss of postural control, and tonic muscular contraction producing teeth-clenching and rigidity in extension (tonic phase), followed by rhythmic muscular jerking (clonic phase). Tongue-biting and incontinence may occur during the seizure. Recovery of consciousness is typically gradual over many minutes to hours. Headache and confusion are common postictal phenomena.	There is sudden, brief impairment of consciousness without loss of postural control. The attacks can be mistaken for complex partial seizures but are shorter in duration; they occur much more frequently (20–30 times a day) and are not associated with post-ictal confusion. Minor motor symptoms are common, while complex automatisms and clonic activity are not.	These are seizures involving brief loss of muscle tone. Usually resulting in heavy falls with or without loss of Consciousness.

Focal seizure		
[Originate in networks limited to one cerebral hemisphere. It may be present with or without dyscognitive features depending on the presence of cognitive impairment.] ^[2]		
Partial motor seizures [Jacksonian seizure]^[2]	Partial sensory seizures^[2]	Partial visual seizures^[2]
Epileptic activity arising in the pre-central gyrus causes partial motor seizures affecting the contralateral side. Seizures are characterised by rhythmical jerking or sustained spasm of the affected parts. They may remain localised to one part, or may spread to involve the whole side. Attacks may be from a few seconds to several hours (epilepsia partialis continua).	Seizures arising in the sensory cortex cause unpleasant tingling or ‘electric’ sensations in the contralateral face or limbs. A spreading pattern similar to a Jacksonian seizure may occur, the abnormal sensation spreading over the body much faster (in seconds) than the march Of a migrainous focal sensory attack, which spreads over 20–30 minutes	Occipital epileptic foci cause simple visual hallucinations such as balls of light or patterns of colour. Formed visual hallucinations of faces or scenes arise more anteriorly in the temporal lobes

5. Investigations: After occurrence of first seizure, immediate cerebral imaging with CT or MRI is advisable.^[2] Other investigations for infective, toxic and metabolic causes may be appropriate^[1, 2]. An EEG performed immediately after a seizure may be more helpful in showing focal features than if performed after a delay^[2]. In a situation where more than one seizure has occurred, an EEG is often useful in establishing the type of epilepsy and to guide therapy^[2].

6. Differential diagnosis^[1]:

- Syncope (Vasovagal syncope, Cardiac arrhythmia, Valvular heart disease, Cardiac failure, Orthostatic hypotension)
- Psychological disorders (Psychogenic seizure, Hyperventilation, Panic attack)
- Metabolic disturbances (Alcoholic blackouts, Delirium tremens, Hypoglycemia, Hypoxia, Psychoactive drugs (e.g., hallucinogens))
- Migraine (Confusional migraine, Basilar migraine)
- Transient ischemic attack (TIA), Basilar artery TIA)
- Sleep disorders (Narcolepsy/cataplexy, Benign sleep myoclonus)
- Movement disorders (Tics, Nonepileptic myoclonus, Paroxysmal choreoathetosis)
- Special considerations in children (Breath-holding spells, Migraine with recurrent abdominal pain and cyclic vomiting, Benign paroxysmal vertigo, Apnea, Night terrors, Sleepwalking).

7. Management: Immediate first aid is necessary, afterwards some moderate life style modifications and anticonvulsant therapy is provided^[2].

7.1 Steps to administer first aid for seizures^[2].

- Immediately move person away from danger (fire, water, machinery, furniture)
- After convulsions cease, turn into ‘recovery’ position

- (semi-prone)
- Ensure airway is clear, but do NOT insert anything in mouth (tongue-biting occurs at seizure onset and cannot be prevented by observers)
- If convulsions continue for more than 5 minutes or recur without person regaining consciousness, summon urgent medical attention
- Do not leave person alone until fully recovered (drowsiness and confusion can persist for up to 1 hour).

8. Homoeopathic therapeutics for seizure

8.1 Absinthium: In a case of epileptoid vertigo, signs of constant cerebral spinal congestion; nausea and tendency to frequent vomiting, persistent tremors; epileptoid attacks of hysterical character and opisthotonos. Makes grimaces, and foams at the mouth in epilepsy. Falling down, as in epilepsy, unconscious, with distortion of the features, followed by spasms of the body and limbs, bloody foam at mouth, and biting of the tongue; stupidity and loss of memory afterward.^[3]

8.2 Agaricus: Epilepsy (with great exertion of strength). Typhoid states often call for it, and also epilepsy^[3].

8.3 Ammonium Bromatum: It is indicated in epilepsy when the aura begins with a fainting or suffocating sensation at epigastrium, rising up both sides of sternum to throat^[3].

8.4 Amygdalus Communis: A peculiar cramp of the stomach, trismus, rigidity of the tongue, opisthotonos, alternately with clonic cramps of various kinds and degrees, as its direct action. The irritability is gradually exhausted, and in the secondary action the contractility of the muscular fibre and the vital power sink in the same degree that they had previously been exalted^[4].

8.5 Amyl Nitrosum: Epilepsy without aura, after fright and

other violent emotions and after masturbation. Epilepsy is preceded by twitching over whole body. Nerve tremors of the aged, chorea, paralysis agitans, epilepsy. Epileptic spasms followed by nausea and vomiting. Excitement, with epileptic attacks. Epilepsy at time of menses ^[5].

8.6 Anantherum Muricatum: Epileptic convulsions, commencing with sadness, restlessness, hiccough, contraction of the diaphragm, burning in the stomach, congestion of blood to the head, then loss of consciousness, falling down, violent movements of the limbs, bloody frothing at the mouth, seminal losses, involuntary stools and urination ^[4].

8.7 Antipyrinum: Epileptic attacks, with partial unilateral twitching; contraction of muscles; chattering of teeth; jactitation ^[3].

8.8 Argentum Metallicum: Epileptic attacks followed by delirious rage, jumping about, striking those near. Delirious rage (mania; after epilepsy) ^[3].

8.9 Argentum Nitricum: Epileptic fit after heavy meal. Epileptic attacks caused by fright, or during menstruation (at night, or in the morning when rising) ^[3].

8.10 Arsenicum Album: Epileptic fits, preceded by burning in the stomach, pressure and heat in the back, extending to the nape of the neck, and to the brain, with dizziness ^[3].

8.11 Artemisia Vulgaris: It is indicated where the patient is excitable and irritable before attack of epilepsy. Epilepsy after fright or grief; after a blow on the head, with menstrual disturbances, with teething. Irregular or deficient menstruation with epileptic convulsions. Epileptic spasms after cooling off while over-heated from dancing. During epileptic attacks violent sweat of offensive odour ^[3].

8.12 Atropinum Pur: Headaches of epileptics. Epilepsy from ovarian irritation ^[3].

8.13 Bufo: The epileptic seizure and the status-epilepticus when the attacks occur during sleep at night. Epileptic symptoms are agg. In warm room; but there is also great sensitiveness to cold air and wind. Epileptic attacks with menses. Contraction of fingers of right hand, then left, followed by lapping movement of tongue with thumbs drawn into pelvis; before an attack Epileptic attacks, ushered in by a cry, face livid, followed by sleep, occur at midnight, at time of menses, at change of moon, result of sexual excitement ^[3].

8.14 Calcarea Arsenicosa: Rush of blood to head before an epileptic attack. Epilepsy with heart disease. Palpitation and heart pains preceding epileptic attack ^[3].

8.15 Calcarea Carbonica: Aura spreads up from the solar plexus, in which the convulsion comes on immediately, or it may be like a mouse running on the arm; or it may run down from epigastrium into uterus or limbs. Epileptic convulsions, also at night with cries; during the full moon; with hallooing and shouting. ^[3]

8.16 Camphora Offinalis: Attacks of epilepsy, with rattling

in the throat; face, red and puffed, convulsive movements of the limbs, and even of the tongue, of the eyes, and of the muscles of the face; hot and viscid perspiration on the scalp, and on the forehead; after the fit, comatose drowsiness. ^[3]

8.17 Causticum: Epilepsy when fit occurs in sleep and urine escapes ^[3].

8.18 Chamomilla: Epileptic convulsions, with retraction of the thumbs, and foam before the mouth, preceded by colic, or followed by a lethargic state ^[3].

8.19 Chenopodium: Hemiplegia with contractions of limbs, and certain epileptic seizures are strongly portrayed in the poisoning ^[3].

8.20 Cicutia Virosa: General convulsions, and fits of epilepsy, sometimes with cries, paleness or yellow colour of the face, pressing together of the jaws, numbness and distortion of the limbs, suspension of respiration, and foam at the mouth ^[3].

8.21 Cimicifuga Racemosa: Aura with "waving sensation in the brain" which is a leading symptom of the remedy. Epileptic and hysterical convulsions ^[3].

8.22 Cina Maritima: Headache before and after the epileptic attacks. Before coughing, child raises herself suddenly, tosses wildly about, the whole body becomes stiff, she loses consciousness, just as if she would have an epileptic fit, then follows the cough. Nocturnal epileptic convulsions, followed by headache ^[3].

8.23 Cuprum Metallicum: Spasmodic affections, cramps, convulsions (tonic and clonic), beginning in fingers and toes, violent, contractive, and intermittent pain. In epilepsy, aura begins at knees, ascends to hypogastrium, then unconsciousness, foaming and falling. ^[5] Spasmodic affections generally; whooping-cough where the attacks run into catalepsy; movements of the head. Epileptic attacks (at night), followed by headache. Shiverings after attacks of epilepsy. Many attacks (epileptic attacks, attacks of mania) end with cold perspiration ^[3].

8.24 Cypripedium Pubescens: Epilepsy from reflex irritation ^[3].

8.25 Drosera: Epileptic attacks with rigidity, with twitching of limbs. Epileptic convulsions, with sleep and spitting of blood, after the fit ^[3].

8.26 Galvanismus: Recurrence of epilepsy cured a long time previously. The epileptic attacks which occurred at night, now take place in the daytime ^[3].

8.27 Heracleum Sphondylium: Recommended as a spinal stimulant; in epilepsy with flatulency, gouty and skin symptoms ^[3].

8.28 Hydrocyanicum Acidum: Hysterical and epileptic convulsions ^[3, 5].

8.29 Hyocyamus Niger: Epileptic attacks ending in deep sleep with snoring ^[3, 5]. Epileptic convulsions, alternately

with attacks of cerebral congestion (apoplectic fit). Fever, with fits of epilepsy, great weakness, flames before the eyes, and congestion in the head, quartan or quotidian type ^[3].

8.30 Ignatia Amara: Epileptic convulsions with foam at the mouth, frequent yawning, convulsed eyes, retraction of the thumbs, face red, or alternately pale and red ^[3].

8.31 Indigo Tinctoria: Marked action on the nervous system, and of undoubted benefit in the treatment of epilepsy with great sadness. Epilepsy; flashes of heat from abdomen to head; fit begins with dizziness ^[3]. Great melancholy which the patient has sought to hide, spending many nights crying alone; or a furious excitable disposition before the attacks and mild and timid after. A peculiar sensation is an undulating sensation in the brain (agar m) ^[3].

8.32 Kali Bromatum: epilepsy occur in men with sexual excess or abuse; and in women during or near the menstrual period. Epilepsy occurring at the new moon and when headache follows the fit. A marked periodicity appears in the symptoms. Epilepsy from ovarian irritation (Atropinum pur).

8.33 Laurocerasus: Epileptic convulsions with foaming at mouth, which is tightly closed ^[3].

8.34 Melilotus Officinalis: Epilepsy from blow on head ^[5].

8.35 Methylenum Coeruleum: Tendency to tremor, chorea and epilepsy ^[5].

8.36 Millefolium: Convulsions and epilepsy from suppressed menses ^[3,5].

8.37 Moschus: In epileptic fits where there is rigor or chilliness, or shuddering as though the patient was very cold ^[3].

8.38 Nitric Acid: Epilepsy >> riding in carriage. Epileptic fits, preceded by pulling in limbs and followed by rigidity of body and stertorous breathing. Epileptic attacks after midnight, beginning like a mouse moving up and down left side, then loss of consciousness ^[3].

8.39 Nitrogenium Oxygenatum: Epileptic convulsion during anaesthesia. Pain in forehead where the aura commenced (in an epileptic under the gas) ^[3].

8.40 Nux Moschata: Convulsions: epileptic, with consciousness in children along with diarrhea ^[3].

8.41 Occimum Can: There was a history of epilepsy in the family, and as a child the patient had had three fits ^[3].

8.42 Oenanthe Crocata: During the fit there is vomiting, tympanitis, semi-priapism. Epilepsy arising from disorders of the sexual sphere ^[3].

8.43 Picrotoxin: Epilepsy attacks in the morning on leaving horizontal position ^[5].

8.44 Plumbum Metallicum: Epilepsy preceded by vertigo, sometimes sighing, followed by stupid feeling. Epileptic fits

(without consciousness) ^[3].

8.45 Pulsatila Pratenses: Epilepsy with absence or irregularity of menses. Epileptic convulsions, with violent movements of limbs, followed by weakness, eructations, and inclination to vomit (after suppression of catamenia) ^[3].

8.46 Saccharum Officinale: Epilepsy; blood with reduced sugar content irritates the nervous system with tending to convulsions ^[5].

8.47 Salamandra Maculata: It is complementary in epilepsy and brain-softening (Hering) ^[3].

8.48 Silicea Terra: Periodical states; abscesses, quinsy, headaches, spasms, epilepsy, feeling of coldness before an attack.

8.49 Solanum Carolinense: Convulsions and epilepsy [20-40 drop doses] is of great value in grand mal of idiopathic type, where the disease has begun beyond age of childhood. Hystero-epilepsy ^[3].

8.50 Spirae Ulmaris: Relieves irritation of the urinary passages; influences the prostate gland; checks gleet and prostaticorrhoea; has been used for eclampsia, epilepsy, and hydrophobia ^[3,5].

8.51 Stannum Metallicum: Attacks of epilepsy (in children during dentition) with retraction of thumbs and tossing about of body or with throwing back of head, paleness of face, convulsive movements of hands and eyes and loss of consciousness. The attacks come on sometimes in evening ^[3].

8.52 Stramonium: Onanism, causing epilepsy. Convulsions as in epilepsy, but without loss of consciousness ^[3].

8.53 Sulfonalum- Epilepsy, inveterate cases with over-excitability of the cortical substance ^[3].

8.54 Sumbulus: Epilepsy falls forward, foaming at mouth ^[3].

8.55 Syphilinum: Constant linear headache, commencing at both angles of forehead and extending in parallel lines backward - a precursor of epileptic attack. Putrid taste in mouth before epileptic fit ^[3].

8.56 Tarantula Hispanica: Hysterical epilepsy ^[3,5].

8.57 Thea Chinensis: Epilepsy in a child from swallowing a concentrated infusion ^[3].

8.58 Verbena Officinalis: Epilepsy, insomnia, mental exhaustion. In epilepsy, it brightens up the patient's mental powers and helps in constipation. In epilepsy must be continued for a long time ^[5].

8.59 Viscus album: Epilepsy, chorea, and metrorrhagia. Symptoms like epileptic aura and petit mal. ^[5]

8.60 Zincum valerianicum: Hystero-epilepsy. "epilepsy without aura" ^[5].

9. Conclusion

Homoeopathy is a branch of science which holistically cures not only the disease but patient as a whole. But sometimes peculiar character of even rare medicines helps patient to recover. So one must have knowledge about rare ones. These are rare because significant drug provings have not been done.

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