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Chulalongkorn
Comprehensive
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Centre

Natural history and drug-resistant epilepsy

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Talk overview

- Natural course and prognosis of
 - ❖ *Febrile seizures*
 - ❖ *First unprovoked seizure*
 - ❖ *Untreated epilepsy*
 - ❖ *Treated epilepsy*
- Patterns of treatment response in newly diagnosed epilepsy
- Defining drug-resistant epilepsy
- Predictors and consequences of drug-resistant epilepsy



Natural course and prognosis of febrile seizures

Long-term prognosis of febrile seizures

- Population-based studies: risk of later developing epilepsy **between 2 and 7%** (depending on duration of follow up)

Chungath M and Shorvon S; Nat Clin Pract Neurol 2008

- 1980s to 2012, with a mean follow-up of 21.6 years
 - 6% of the children developed subsequent epilepsy** (compared with a population risk of 1.4%)

- age-specific incidence **risk of developing epilepsy is almost 10 times** (SIR = 9.7, 95% CI 5.7-16.4)

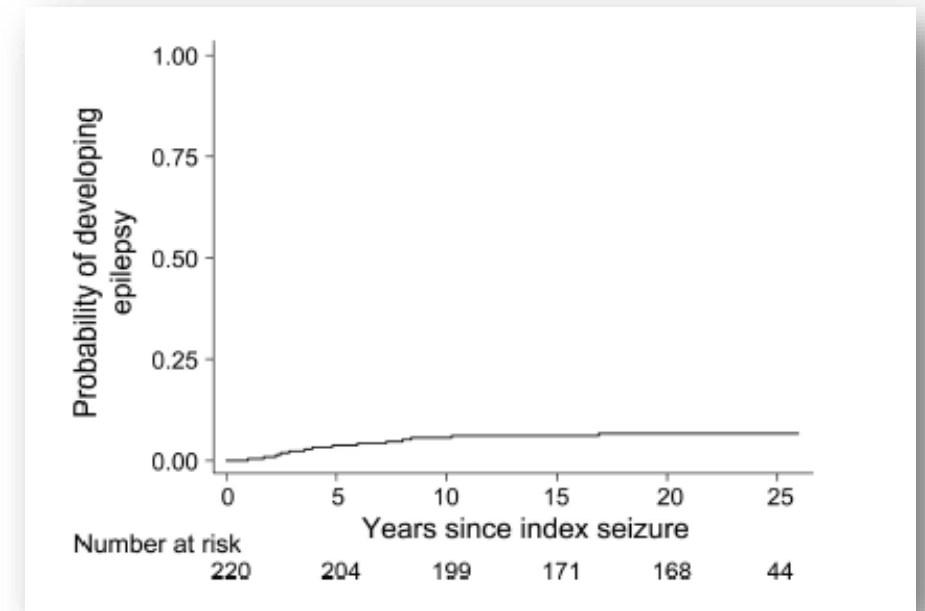
Neligan A et.al; Neurology 2012

- 12-yr F/U: 1/3 simple febrile convulsions

Risk factors: 1) number of FC:

The more febrile convulsions that occurred, the more likely was subsequent epilepsy

2) complex FC



MacDonald BK et.al; Eur Neurol 1999



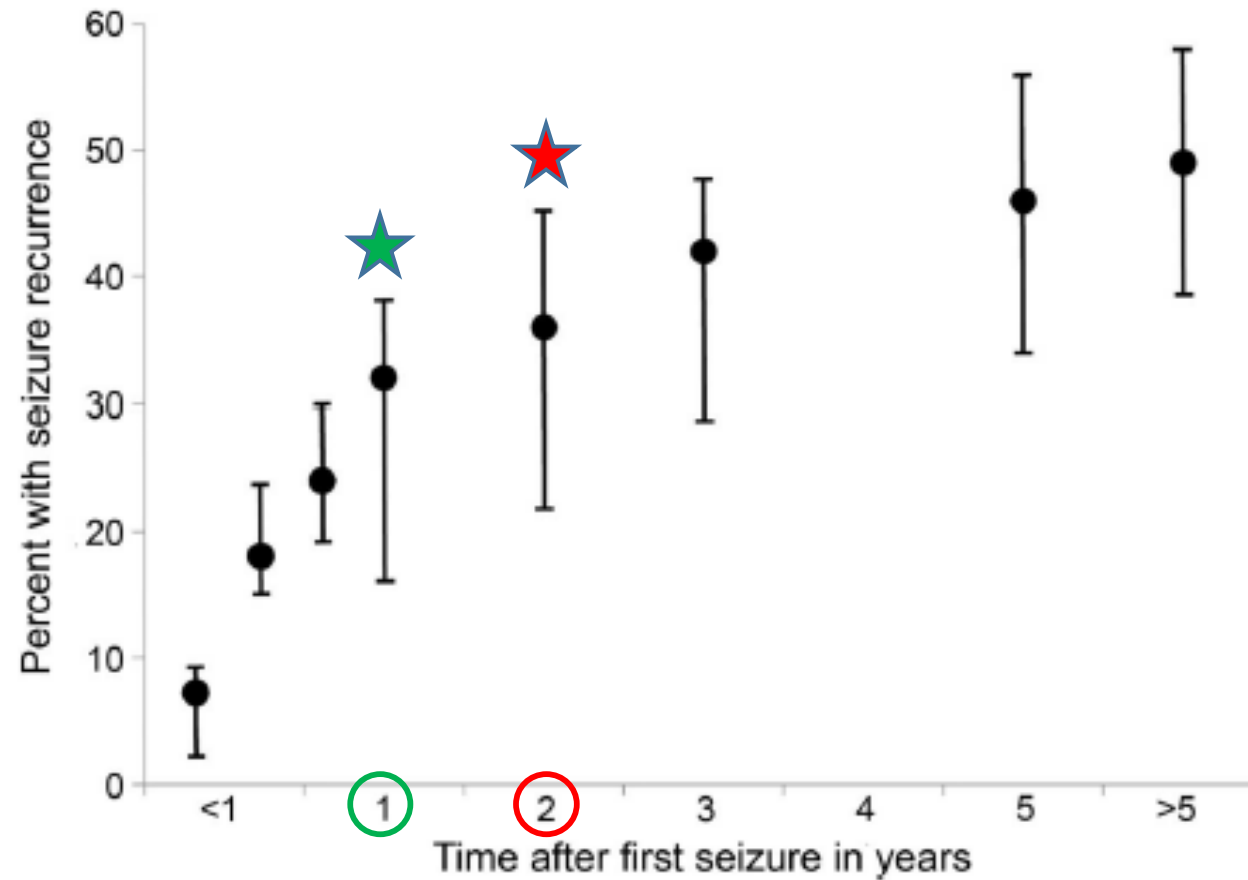
Natural course and prognosis of first unprovoked seizure

An adult with an unprovoked first seizure is at greatest risk of a recurrence relatively early within the **first 2 years (21-45%)** and especially in the first year

Table 1 Risk of seizure recurrence after an unprovoked first seizure in adults (Class I and II studies)

Ref.	Class	Age, y	No.	Treated	Seizure recurrences at various times, n (%)							
					1 mo	3 mo	6 mo	1 y	2 y	3 y	5 y	>5 y
10, 11	I	70% >19	238	164 (69)	—	—	—	38 (16)	50 (21)	60 (29)	70 (34)	81 (39)
12, 13	I	72% >16	397	204 (51)	24 (6)	58 (15)	75 (19)	98 (25)	111 (28)	—	—	—
17	II	≥16	147	62 (42)	—	—	39 (27)	50 (34)	60 (41)	61 (41)	—	—
18	II	Mean >20	76	36 (47)	2 (3)	18 (24)	20 (26)	22 (29)	—	—	—	—
16	II	≥16	306	41 (13)	—	55 (18)	79 (26)	111 (36)	136 (44)	144 (47)	—	—
19	II	75% >15	424	?	38 (9)	89 (21)	127 (30)	153 (36)	191 (45)	204 (48)	237 (56)	244 (58)
20	II	14-91	497	127 (26)	—	—	—	191 (38)	—	—	—	—
15	II	60% >20	812	404 (50)	—	—	179 (22)	—	288 (35)	—	378 (46)	398 (49)
21	II	≥16	228	113 (50)	—	—	—	68 (30)	—	—	—	—
22	II	18-50	87	45 (52)	—	—	—	30 (34)	37 (43)	39 (45)	—	—
Total			3,212	1,196 (43)	64 (7)	220 (18)	519 (24)	761 (32)	873 (36)	508 (42)	685 (46)	723 (49)

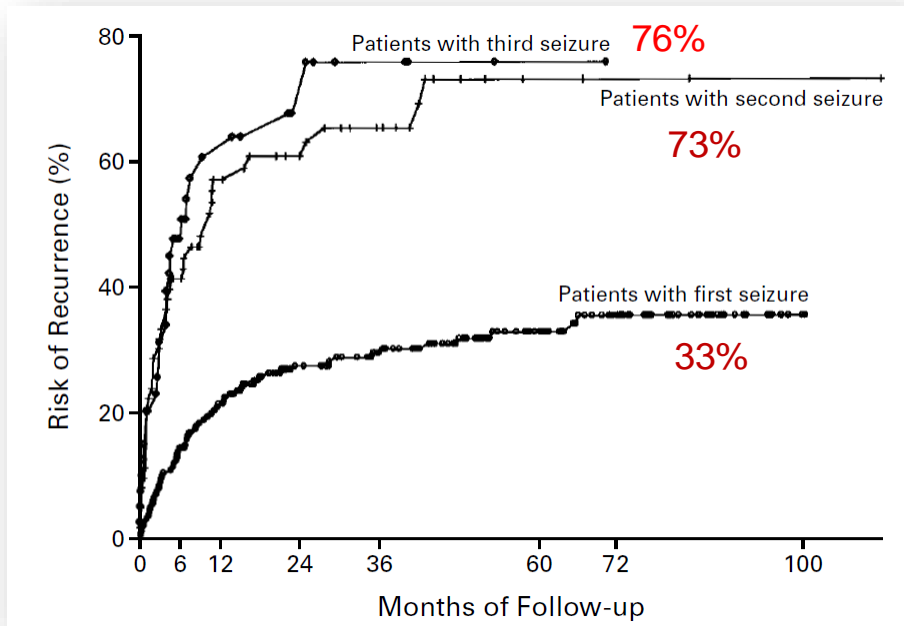
Figure 1 Percentages of patients with first seizure experiencing a recurrent seizure over time



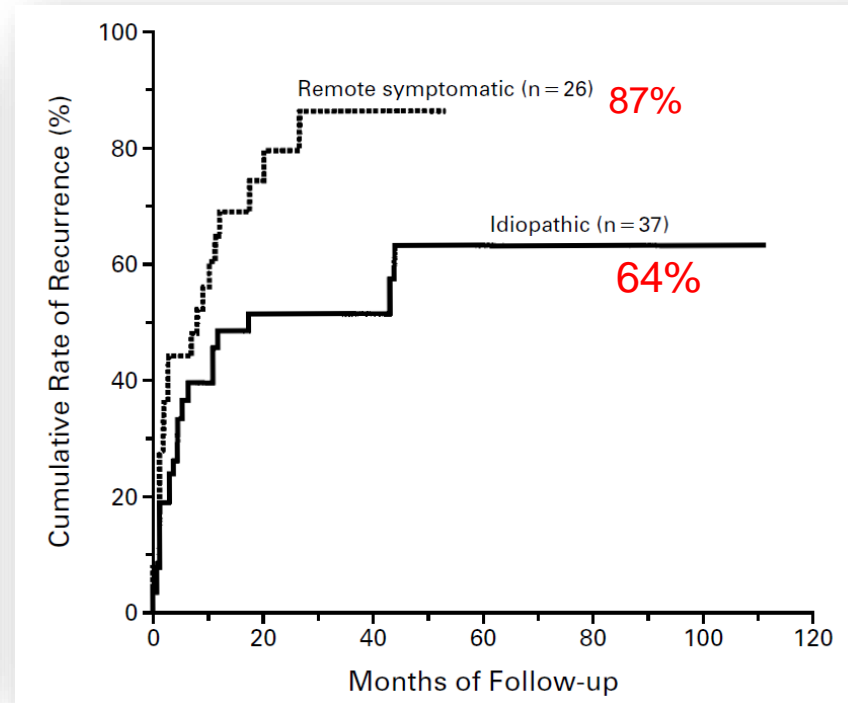
This graph is based on a fixed-effect pooled percentage model from data in table 1 and shows the cumulative average and the range for each time period from 1 month to more than 5 years.

Risk of recurrence

After first, second and third seizure



Etiology



Prediction of risk of seizure recurrence

MESS studies

	Prognostic index
Starting value	
- 1 seizure prior to presentation	0
- 2 or 3 seizures prior to presentation	1
- 4 or more seizures prior to presentation	2
Add if present	
- Neurological disorder or deficit, <i>learning disability</i> or <i>developmental delay</i>	1
- Abnormal EEG	1
Risk classification group for seizure recurrence	
- Low risk	0
- Medium risk	1
- High risk	2-4

“There is little benefit to immediate treatment in patients at low risk of seizure recurrence, but potentially worthwhile benefits are seen in those at medium and high risk”

“Should treat”

First unprovoked seizure with
➤ **Abnormal neurological signs**

and/or

➤ **Epileptiform discharges on EEG**



Natural course and prognosis of untreated epilepsies

Introduction

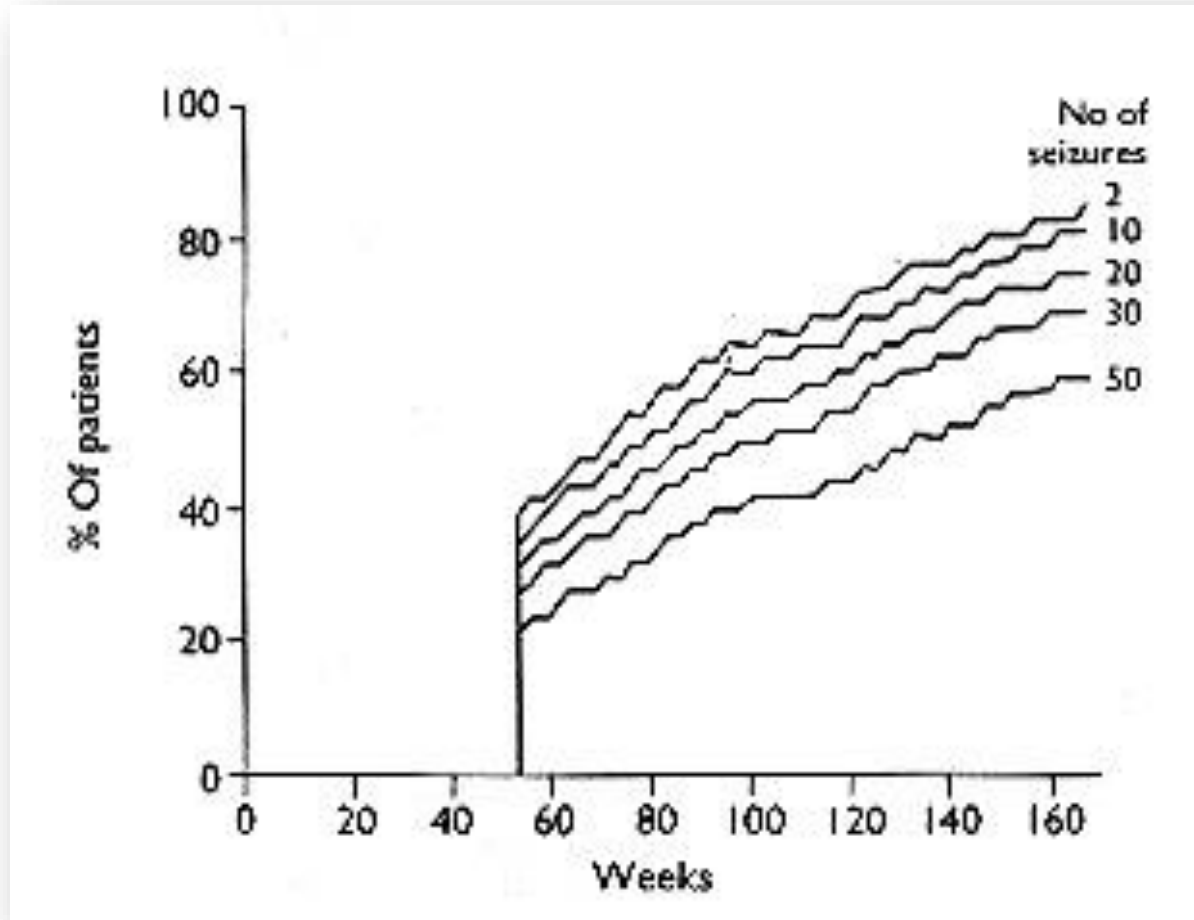
- **The course of disorders from onset to resolution, without interventions (Last, 1988)**
- **Evidence-based treatments with proven efficacy alter the natural course of disorders**
- **Prospective studies in untreated patients are thus not possible.**

Effect of duration of epilepsy on long-term prognosis

Gower's observation and Reynolds EH studies pointed out that the longer the history of epilepsy the worse the longer term prognosis

*Gowers WR 1881
Reynolds EH; BMJ 1995
Reynolds EH et.al; Epilepsia 1989*

Effect of number of seizure prior to treatment

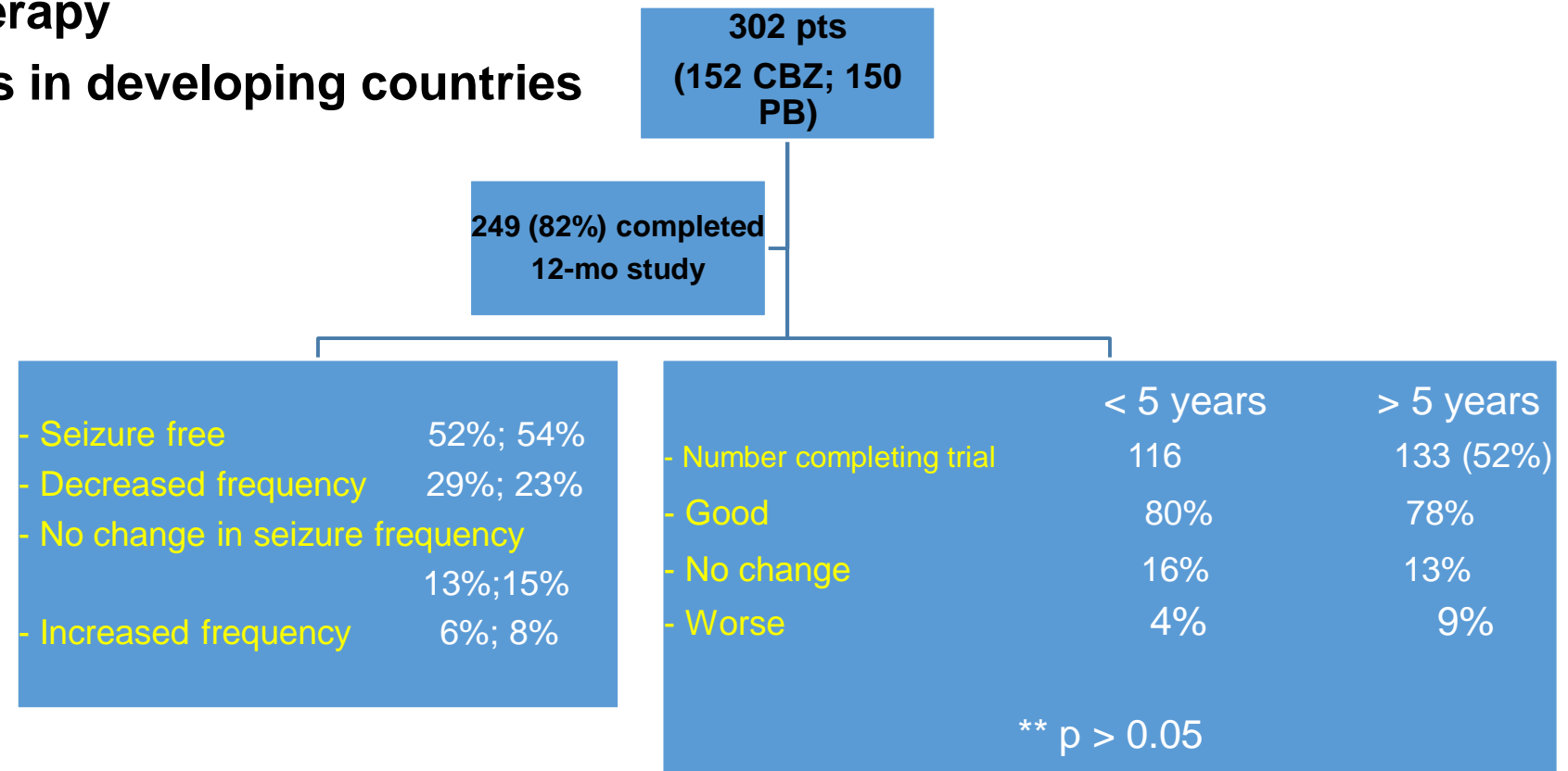


**Prospective study:
241 adults with newly
diagnosed epilepsy
treated with one drug**

*Gowers WR 1881
Reynolds EH; BMJ 1995
Reynolds EH et.al; Epilepsia 1989*

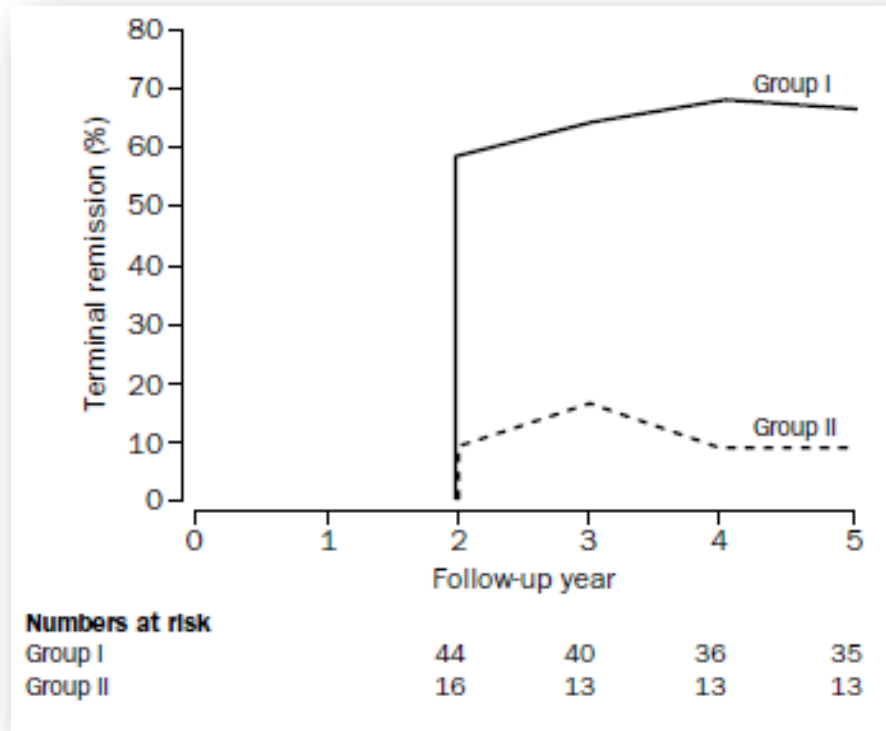
The effects of AEDs on long-lasting untreated epilepsy

- A study in Kenya (Lancet, 1991) : a finding that does not support the suggestion that the disorder becomes intractable if not treated early.
- Neither length of history of epilepsy nor number of seizures before treatment influenced effect of therapy
- Similar to other studies in developing countries (Malawi and Ecuador)



Feksi AT et.al; Lancet 1991
 Watts AE; Br Med J 1989
 Placencia et.al; JNNP 1994

Effect of number of seizure prior to treatment



135 adult patients with partial seizure or GTCs

- Treated with either PB or PHT
- Primary outcome: 2-year seizure freedom

Group I: good compliance coupled with lifetime total of ≤ 30 GTCs

Group II: poor compliance and lifetime total ≥ 30 GTCs

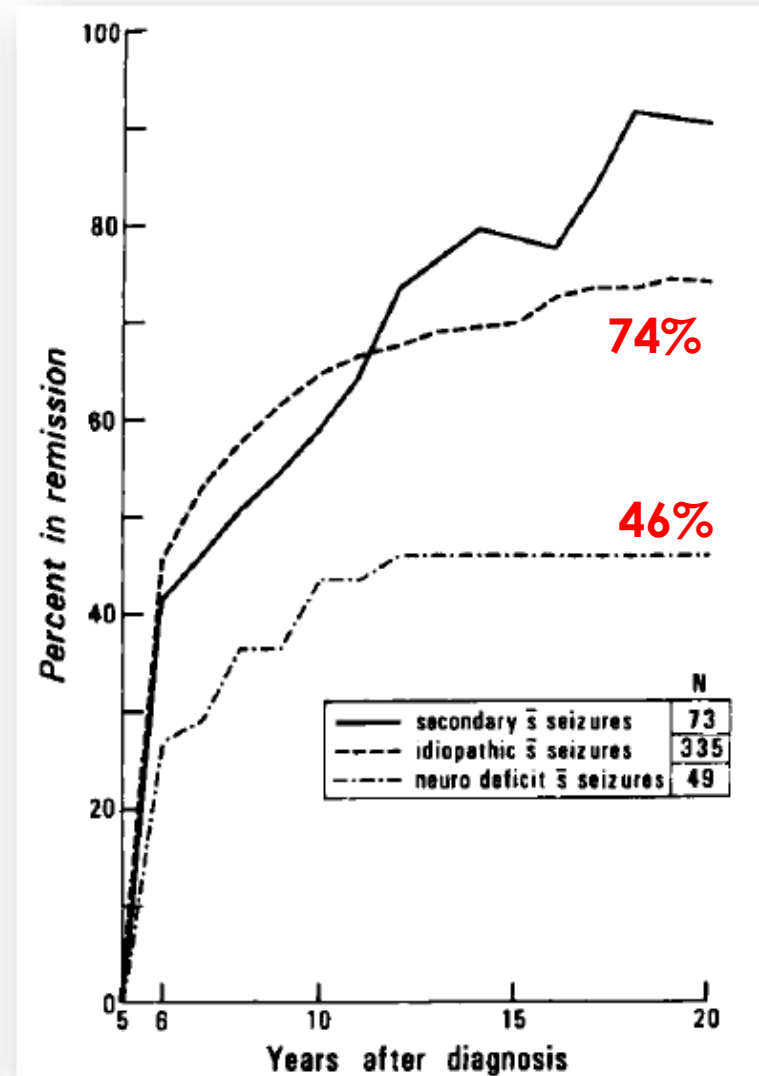
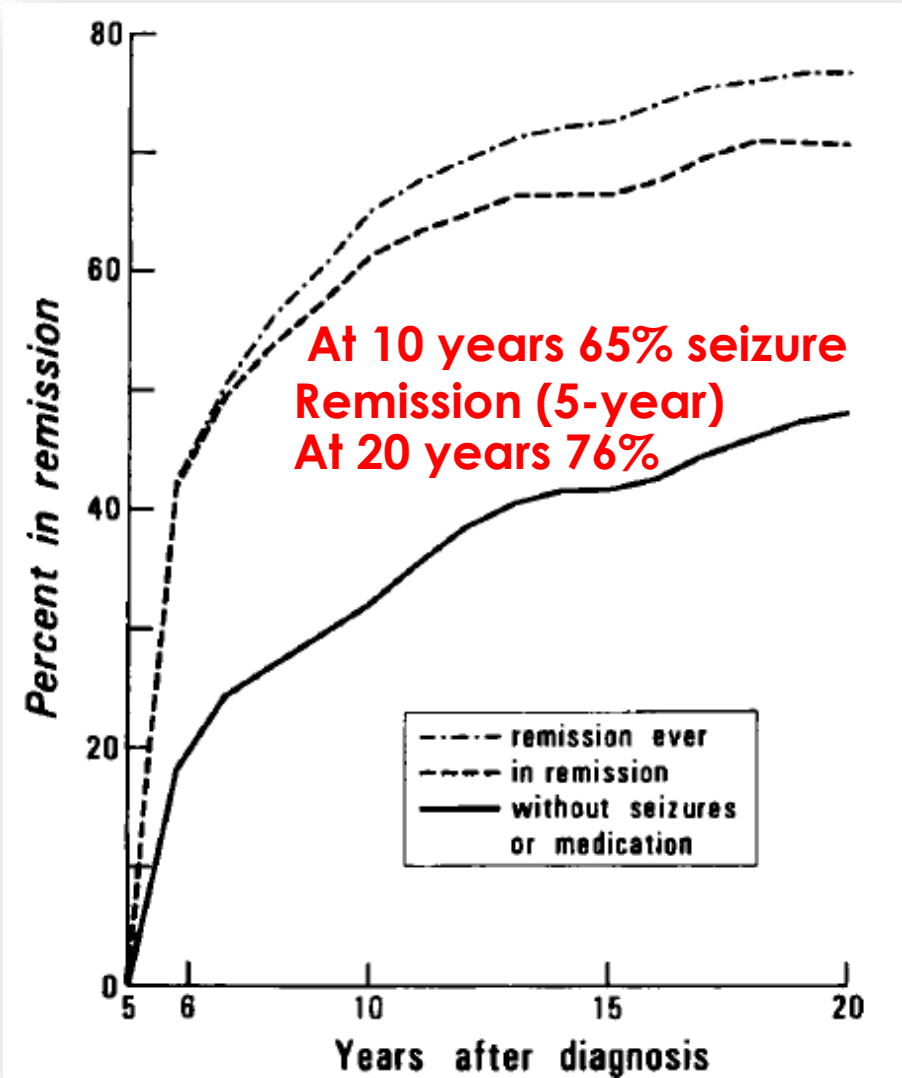


Natural course and prognosis of treated epilepsies

Late prognosis

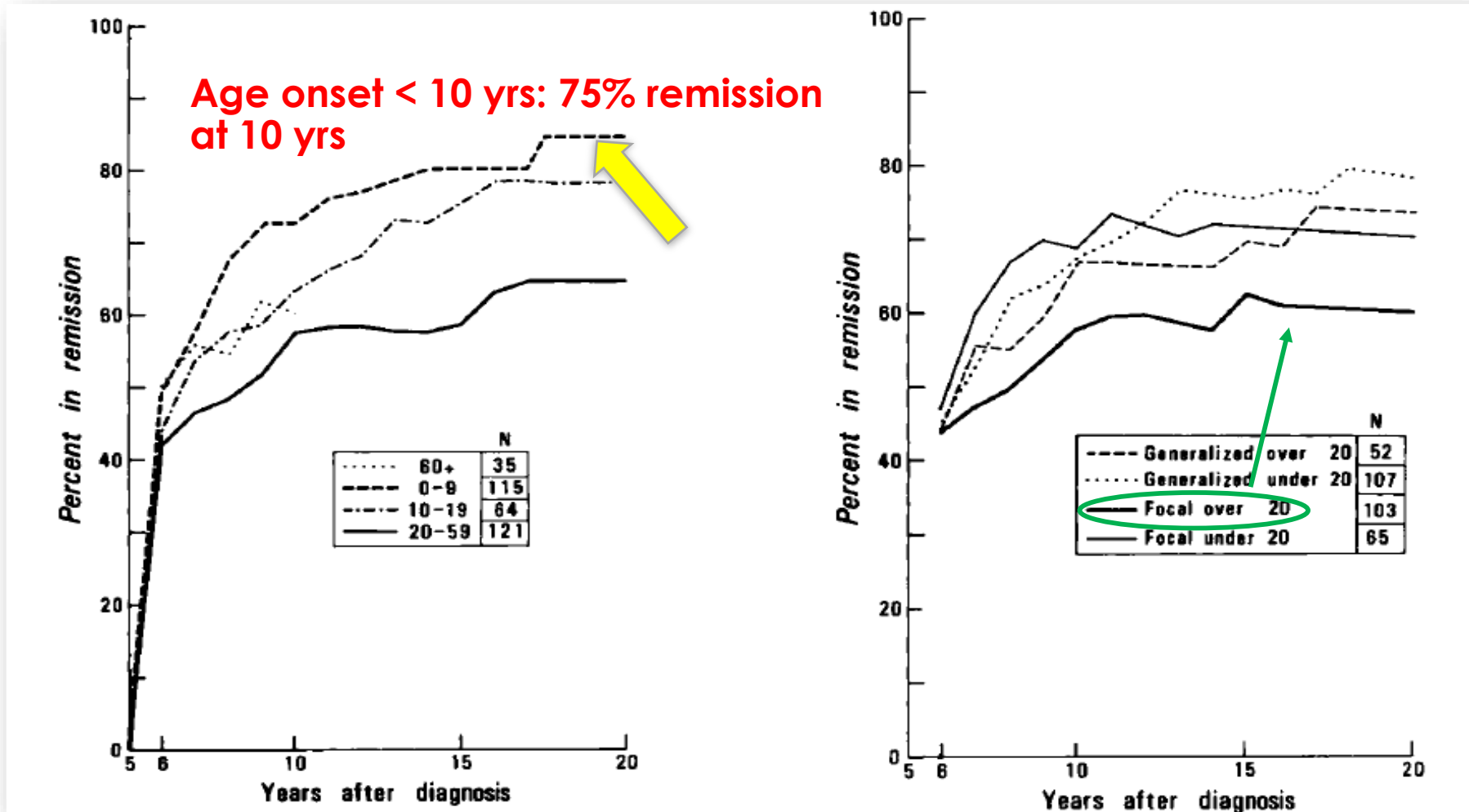
- **Based on 3 longitudinal community-based studies with long-term follow up**
 - **Mayo Clinic Record linkage study (US)**
 - **Tonbridge study (UK)**
 - **Turku study (Finland) (childhood-onset epilepsy)**

Mayo clinic study (20 years follow up)

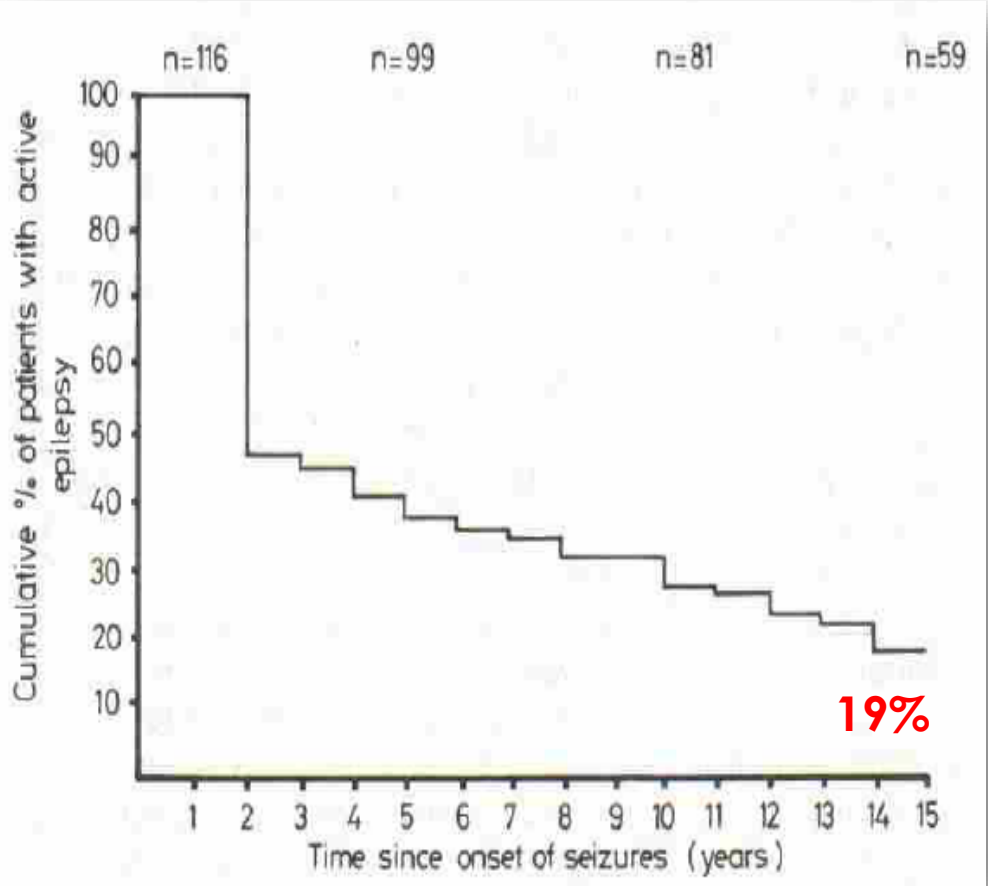
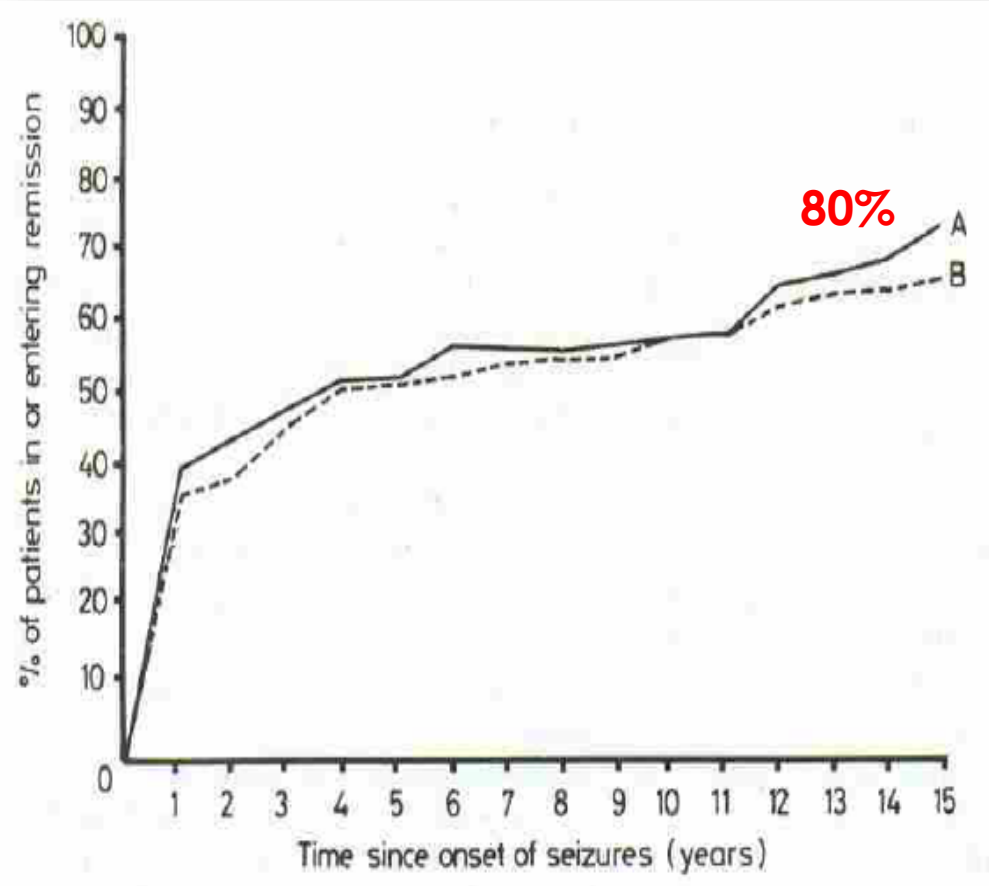


- 475 pts followed at least 5 yrs
- 141 pts > 20 yrs

Mayo clinic study



Tonbridge study (15 years follow up)



About one fifth (20%) of the patients continued to have seizure (chronic epilepsy)

Tonbridge study

- **At 5 years after the first seizure**
 - **of those whose epilepsy was still active, only 21% achieved subsequent terminal remission as compared with 96% of those who were already in remission**

“ the longer seizure continues to occur, the lower the probability for subsequent remission”

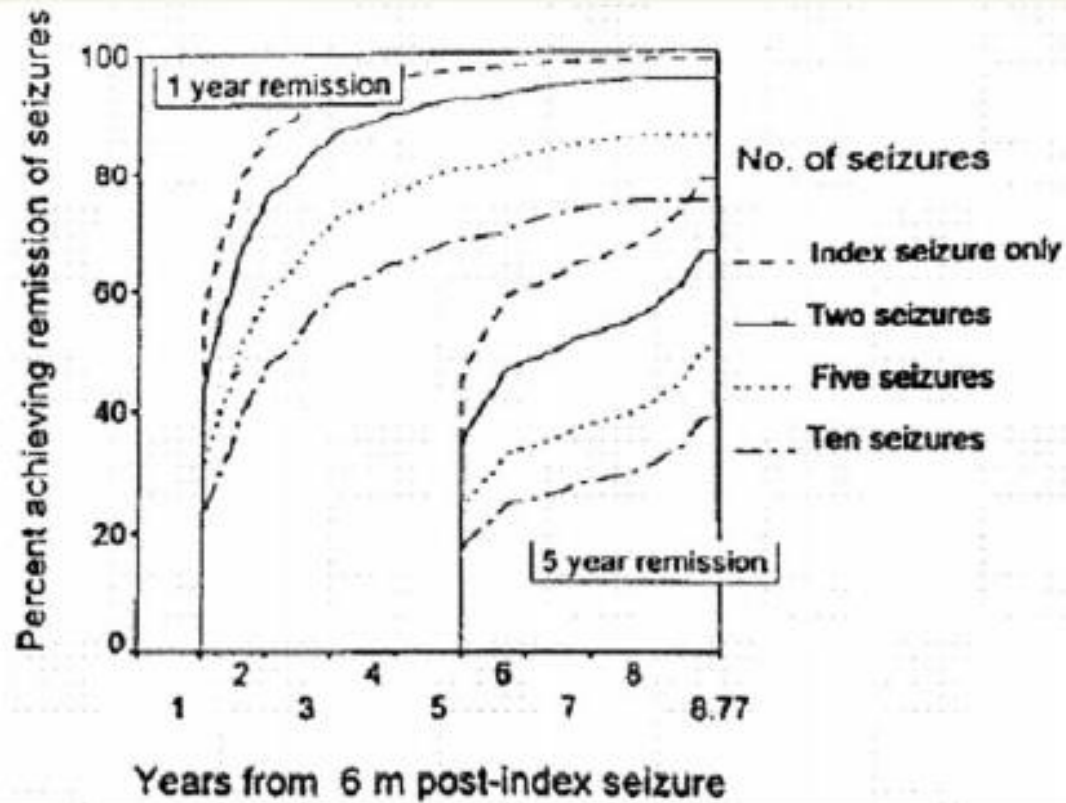
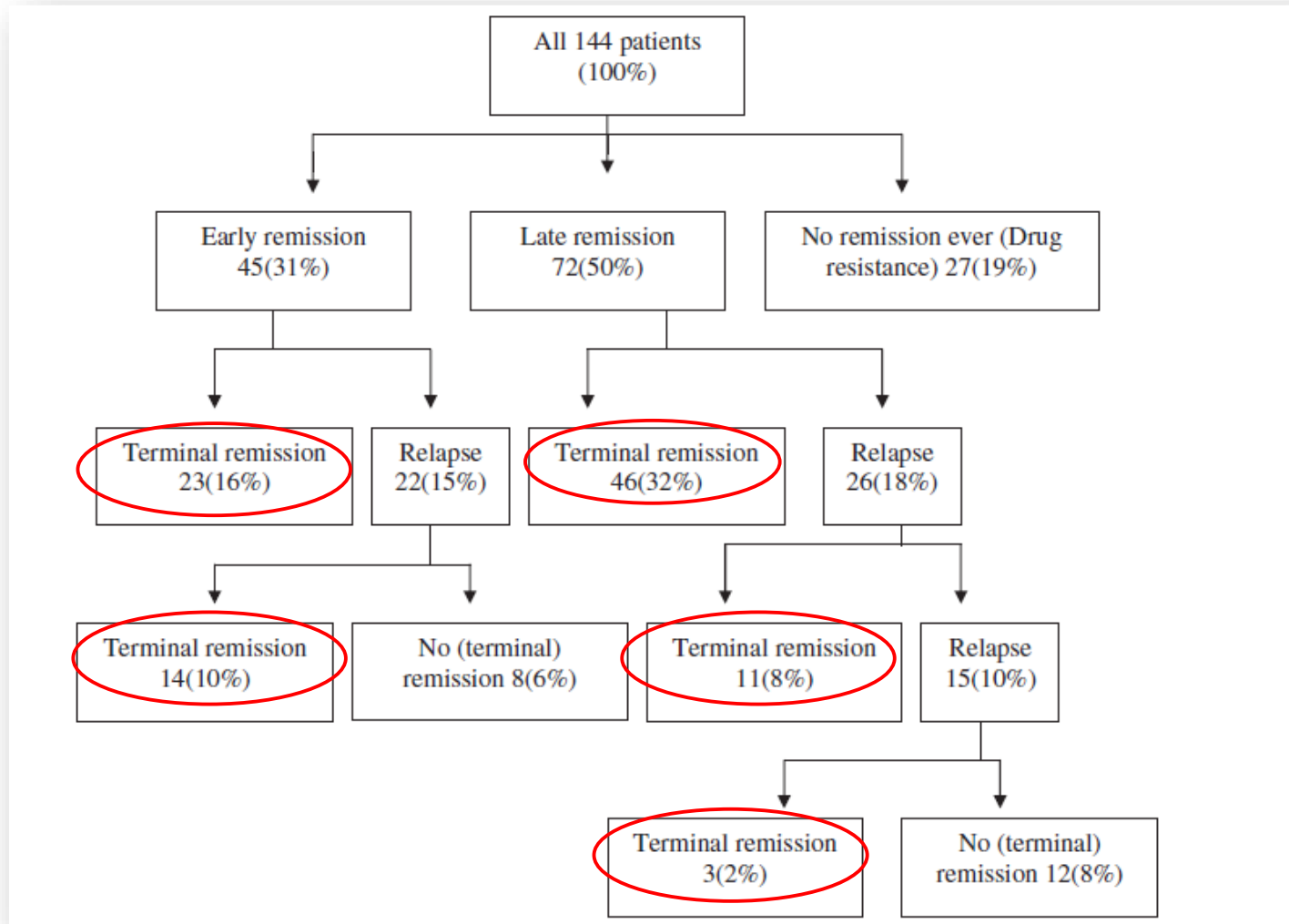


Figure 2 NGPSE: the influence of seizure density on long-term remission. The percentage of patients achieving remission in those who had experienced one (dashed line), two (solid line), five (dotted line), or 10 (dashed and dotted line) seizures in the period from the index seizure to 6 months.

The more number of seizure in the 6 months after the first seizure, the lesser is the chance of long-term remission

Turku study (37 years follow up)

- Seizure before the age of 16 years



- 67% achieved terminal remission (5-year seizure freedom at the end of follow up)
- 19% drug resistant
- 19% entered terminal remission after a relapse

Conclusion

- **2/3 of the patients (58-65%)** achieved 5-year cumulative terminal remission at 7-10 years follow up
- **3/4 of the patients (67-78%)** with childhood-onset epilepsy achieved 3-5 year remission at 12-37 years follow up

Factors which influence on long-term remission rate

- ✓ Neurological deficits
- ✓ Age onset
- ✓ Seizure type
- ✓ Number of early seizure



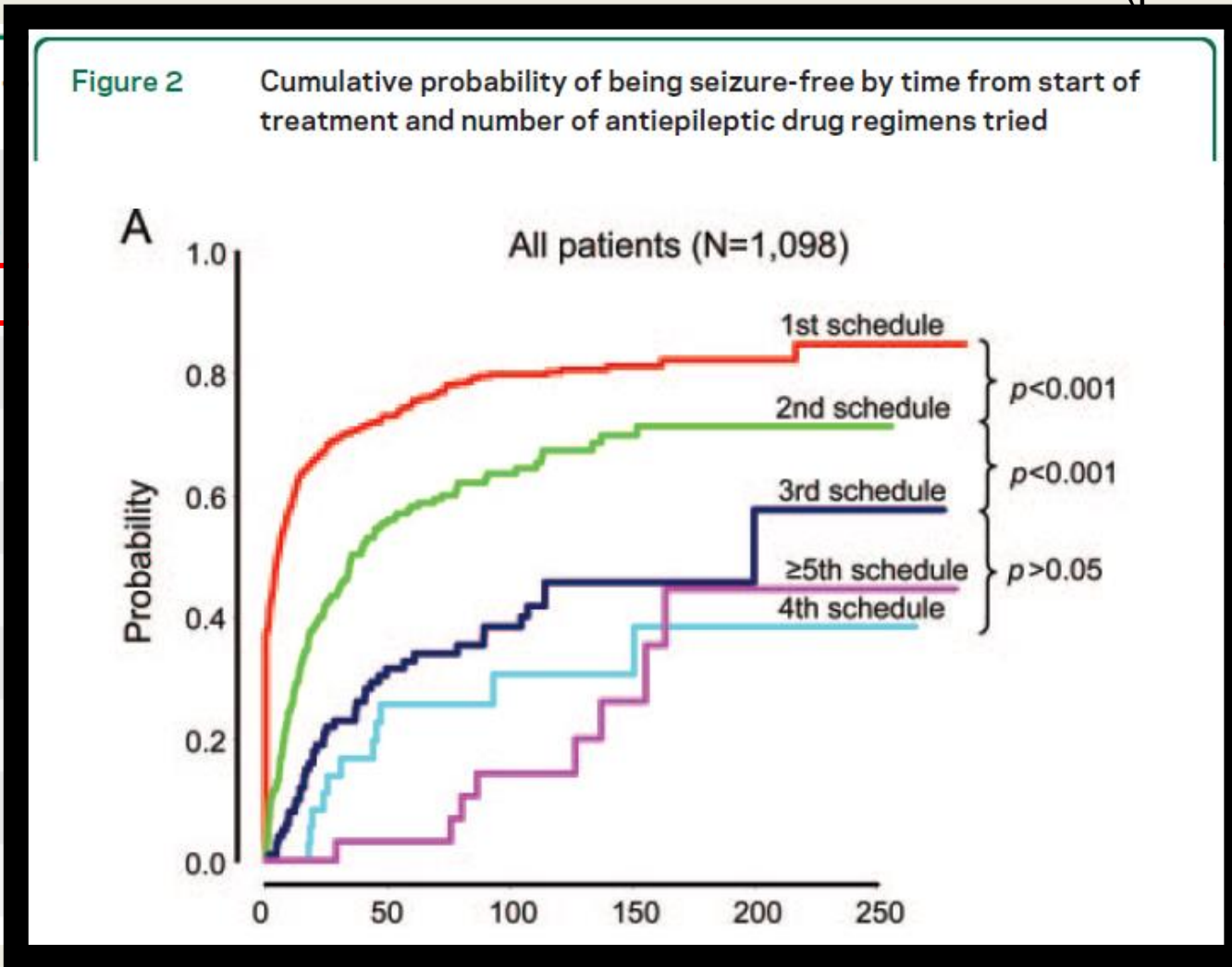
Patterns of treatment response in newly diagnosed epilepsy

Seizure-free rates with successive AED regimens

There was a higher probability of seizure freedom in patients receiving 1 compared to 2 drug regimens, and 2 compared to 3 regimens ($p < 0.001$)

Table 1 Seizure-

Drug regimens	No. of patients
First	1,098
Second	398
Third	168
Fourth	68
Fifth	32
Sixth	16
Seventh	9
Eighth	3
Ninth	2



Drug regimens	% Seizure-free on regimen
First	49.5
Second	36.7
Third	24.4
Fourth	16.2
Fifth	12.5
Sixth	12.5
Seventh	22.2
Eighth	0.0
Ninth	0.0

4 patterns of treatment response (1,098 pts)

A) Early and sustained seizure freedom	37%
B) Delayed but sustained seizure freedom	22%
C) Fluctuation between periods of seizure freedom and relapse	16%
D) Seizure freedom never attained	25%

Seizure freedom was defined as no seizures for 1 year at last follow-up

**Drug responsiveness of a patient's epilepsy should be regarded as a
"dynamic process rather than a fixed state"**

The classification of a patient's epilepsy as drug resistant at a given point in time is valid only at the time of the assessment and does not necessarily imply that the patient will never become seizure-free on further manipulation of AED therapy



Defining drug-resistant epilepsy

Defining Intractability: Comparisons among Published Definitions

- Individual studies use different definitions, creating difficulties for comparisons of results across studies
- **This study was designed to detect the appearance of intractable seizures early in the course of the disorder**
- Study subjects are members of the **Connecticut Study** of Epilepsy, a prospective, **community-based cohort of 613 children** who were recruited during 1993 through 1997 at the time they were **first diagnosed with epilepsy**

Definitions of intractable epilepsy

TABLE 1. *Published criteria used for determining intractable epilepsy*

Study/Citation	Criteria		Comments/qualifications
	Minimum AEDs failed	Seizures	
Connecticut (2)	2	1 seizure per mo for ≥ 18 mo and ≤ 3 mo seizure free during that time	The outcome had to be met within 3 years of diagnosis
Holland (1)	Not specified	At 6 mo after diagnosis, failure to be ≥ 3 mo seizure free	Published criteria were not modified. This is an indicator of risk and not a criterion for intractability per se.
Philadelphia (3)	2	At 2 yr after diagnosis, failure to be ≥ 6 mo seizure free	Criteria were used as published without modification
Canada (5)	3	≥ 1 seizure every 2 mo in last year of follow-up	Modified to be assessed at 5 yr after initial diagnosis
Scotland (6)	2	< 1 yr seizure free at last follow-up	Modified to be assessed at 5 yr after initial diagnosis
Surgery (4)	2	Not explicitly stated	The outcome had to be met within 3 yr of diagnosis

Definitions of intractable epilepsy

TABLE 2. *Proportion of children who met each of the different definitions of intractability or poor outcome*

Criteria (n = number with unclassified outcomes due to insufficient follow-up)	Did not meet criteria	Met criteria
Connecticut (n = 10)	546 (91%)	57 (9%)
Dutch (n = 4)	461 (76%)	148 (24%)
Philadelphia (n = 14)	530 (88%)	69 (12%)
Canadian (n = 48)	514 (91%)	51 (9%)
Scottish (n = 48)	491 (87%)	74 (13%)
Surgery (n = 0)	510 (83%)	103 (17%)

- The epilepsy of **9–24%** of children was considered intractable
- Kappa ranged from low of **0.45 to 0.79**

TABLE 4. Associations between intractability criteria and longer-term outcomes of 2- and 5-year remission

Criteria	In 2-yr remission at last follow-up for those followed up for ≥ 7 yr (n = 549)	In 5-yr remission at last follow-up for those followed up for ≥ 10 yr (n = 210)
Connecticut		
Not intractable	386/502 (77%)	133/193 (69%)
Intractable	4/47 (9%)	1/17 (6%)
RR	9.0 (8.3–9.9)	11.7 (10.3–13.3)
Holland		
Not at increased risk	340/424 (80%)	122/173 (71%)
At increased risk	50/125 (40%)	12/37 (32%)
RR	2.0 (1.8–2.2)	2.2 (1.8–2.6)
Philadelphia		
Not intractable	377/489 (77%)	131/189 (69%)
Intractable	13/60 (22%)	3/21 (14%)
RR	3.6 (3.2–4.0)	4.9 (4.1–5.7)
Canadian		
Not intractable	388/499 (77%)	134/195 (69%)
Intractable	2/50 (4%)	0/15 (0)
RR	14.4 (13.5–15.5)	~20.6 (18.4–23.1)
Scotland		
Not intractable	380/478 (79%)	134/190 (71%)
Intractable	10/71 (14%)	0/20 (0)
RR	5.6 (5.2–6.2)	~28.2 (25.7–31.0)
Surgery		
Not intractable	364/459 (79%)	130/184 (71%)
Intractable	26/90 (29%)	4/26 (15%)
RR	2.7 (2.5–3.0)	4.6 (3.9–5.4)

1 seizure per mo for ≥ 18 mo and ≤ 3 mo seizure free during that time
2 Minimum AEDs failed

≥ 1 seizure every 2 mo in last year of follow-up
3 Minimum AEDs failed

Definition of drug resistant epilepsy: Consensus proposal by the ad hoc Task Force of the ILAE Commission on Therapeutic Strategies

*¹Patrick Kwan, †Alexis Arzimanoglou, ‡Anne T. Berg, §Martin J. Brodie, ¶W. Allen Hauser, #²Gary Mathern, **Solomon L. Moshé, ††Emilio Perucca, ‡‡Samuel Wiebe, and §§²Jacqueline French

Kwan P et al.; Epilepsia 2010

Goals

- Aid nonspecialists in recognizing patients with drug resistant epilepsy for prompt referral to specialist centers for evaluation
- Facilitate comparison and meaningful synthesis of results across studies

Drug resistant epilepsy may be defined as failure of **adequate trials of two tolerated and appropriately chosen and used AED schedules** (whether as monotherapies or in combination) to achieve sustained seizure freedom

The consensus to adopt the failure of two (rather than greater numbers) AED schedules in the definition represents a testable hypothesis and aims to avoid unnecessary delay in evaluation, and may be revised as more high quality data become available

Drug resistant epilepsy may be defined as failure of **adequate** trials of two tolerated and **appropriately chosen** and used AED schedules (whether as monotherapies or in combination) to achieve sustained seizure freedom

Appropriately chosen

For instance, ethosuximide would usually not be considered an appropriate intervention for focal seizures.

Under most circumstances, a trial of this drug in a patient with focal epilepsy would not “count” toward being defined as “drug resistance.”

Adequate

- Application of the intervention at adequate strength/dosage for a sufficient length of time
- This **may not be the case** in some circumstances, for example, **when a drug is withdrawn before it has been titrated to its clinically effective dose range because of an adverse effect**

For adults, reference may be made to the **World Health Organization (WHO)'s defined daily dose (DDD)**, which is the assumed average maintenance dose per day for a drug used for its main indication (World Health Organization, 2008)



News

ATC/DDD Index

Updates included in the ATC/DDD Index

ATC/DDD methodology

ATC

DDD

ATC/DDD alterations, cumulative lists

ATC/DDD Index and Guidelines

Use of ATC/DDD

Courses

Meetings/open session

Deadlines

Links

Postal address:
WHO Collaborating Centre
for Drug Statistics
Methodology
Norwegian Institute of
Public Health
Postboks 222 Skøyen
0213 Oslo
Norway

ATC/DDD Index 2019

A searchable version of the complete ATC index with DDDs is available below. The search options enable you to find ATC codes and DDDs for substance name and/or ATC levels. In your search result you may choose to show or hide the text from the Guidelines for ATC classification and DDD assignment linked to

[New search](#)

[Show text from Guidelines](#)

N NERVOUS SYSTEM

N03 ANTIEPILEPTICS

N03A ANTIEPILEPTICS

N03AF Carboxamide derivatives

ATC code	Name	DDD	U	Adm.R	Note
N03AF01	<u>carbamazepine</u>	1	g	O	
		1	g	R	

[List of abbreviations](#)

https://www.whocc.no/atc_ddd_index/

Drug-responsive epilepsy

Epilepsy in which the patient receiving the current AED regimen has been **seizure-free for a minimum of three times the longest preintervention interseizure interval or 12 months, whichever is longer**

Seizure freedom

Freedom from all types of seizures for 12 months or three times the preintervention interseizure interval, whichever is longer

A patient was newly started on **carbamazepine after two partial seizures in 9 months**. He has had no seizures for **12 months** since

Undefined

The pretreatment interseizure interval was 9 months. **Although the patient has had no seizure for 12 months, the duration is less than three times the pretreatment interseizure interval**, hence outcome to treatment is undetermined and drug responsiveness of epilepsy is **undefined**

A patient had **one seizure in January 2006 and two seizures in October 2006**. After starting treatment in November 2006 he has been **seizure free for 30 months** with no adverse effect

Drug responsive

The longest pretreatment interseizure interval was 9 months (January–October 2006). The patient has had no seizure for more than three times the pretreatment interseizure interval and for more than 12 months



Predictors of drug-resistant epilepsy

Predictors of refractory epilepsy (multivariate analysis)

A total of **780 patients living in the West of Scotland** diagnosed with epilepsy and prescribed their first AED in the Epilepsy Unit of the Western Infirmary in Glasgow, Scotland, between July 1982 and May 2001 were included in this analysis

Predictors	Odds ratio	95% CI
Family history	1.89	1.15 – 3.00
Febrile convulsions in infancy	3.36	1.58 – 7.18
Traumatic brain injury	2.73	1.59 – 4.69
Psychiatric comorbidity (particularly depression)	2.17	1.33 – 3.55
Recreational drug use	4.26	2.03 – 8.94
More than 10 seizures before treatment	2.77	1.98 – 3.89

Consistent predictors of refractory epilepsy

- ❖ Early response to medication
- ❖ Underlying etiology
 - ✓ Epilepsies relating to structural brain abnormalities are less likely to enter remission compared that occurring in patients with structurally normal brains
 - ✓ Lower remission rate for symptomatic epilepsies (both partial and generalised) compared to idiopathic epilepsy syndromes in children
- ❖ Number of seizure prior to treatment



Consequences of drug-resistant epilepsy



Increased mortality



Table 1

Risks of premature death in individuals with epilepsy compared with those in population controls and unaffected siblings.

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	Odds ratio for death compared with population controls (aOR [95% CI])	Odds ratio for death compared with unaffected sibling controls (aOR [95% CI])
All-cause mortality	11.1 (10.6–11.6)	11.4 (10.4–12.5)
Natural causes	15.5 (14.6–16.4)	16.7 (14.9–18.7)
Neoplasms	11.2 (10.3–12.2)	11.3 (9.4–13.7)
Nervous system	71.1 (57.3–88.4)	86.9 (54.3–139.1)
External causes	3.6 (3.3–4.0)	3.2 (2.7–3.7)
Suicide	3.7 (3.3–4.2)	2.9 (2.4–3.6)
All accidents	3.6 (3.1–4.1)	3.6 (2.9–4.5)
Vehicle	1.4 (1.1–1.8)	1.5 (1.1–2.2)
Other	5.5 (4.7–6.5)	6.3 (4.6–8.8)
Drug poisoning	5.1 (3.9–6.5)	5.7 (3.3–9.7)
Fall	8.5 (5.3–13.7)	10.0 (2.9–33.8)
Drowning	7.7 (4.7–12.7)	9.5 (3.5–25.7)
Other and unspecified	4.9 (3.6–6.5)	5.2 (3.2–8.5)
Assault	2.8 (1.6–4.8)	1.7 (0.9–3.3)

Data are adjusted odds ratios (aOR) of external deaths compared with population controls (matched for age and sex, and adjusted for income, and marital and immigration status) or unaffected sibling controls (adjusted for age and sex).

Mortality is greater for those with epilepsy than for those without

Within epilepsy, mortality is greatest for those with refractory epilepsy

SUDEP (sudden, unexplained death in epilepsy)

- The average incidence is **1/1,000** patients with epilepsy per year

- In **refractory epilepsy**, the incidence is **6 /1,000** patients per year, and the lifetime incidence is 7% to 35%, with the greater end of this range applying to childhood-onset refractory epilepsy

- Risk of SUDEP in those with epilepsy is approximately **16-times** that of the general population, after adjustment for multiple factors, including age, sex, and psychiatric and neurologic disease

**Increased risk of
neuropsychiatric impairment**



How are epilepsy and neuropsychiatric conditions related ?

Could be

1) Seizure activity itself

Patients with **chronic seizures** experience greater rates of cognitive deficits, emotional problems, physical and psychiatric disease, health care utilization, educational and occupational underachievement, failure in fulfilling normal social roles, and reduced quality of life

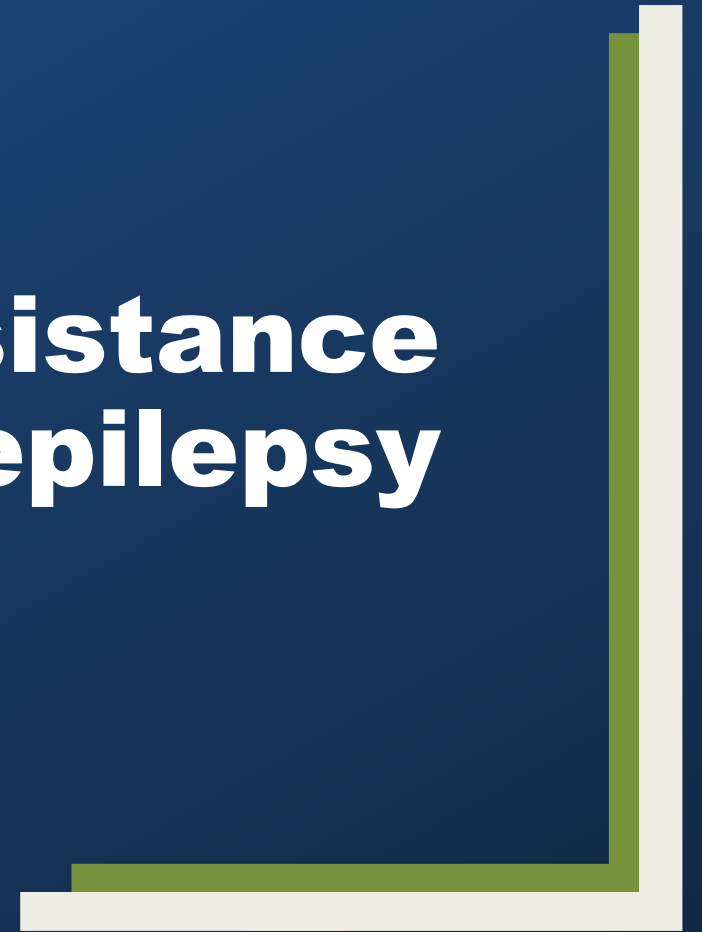
2) Structural and functional abnormalities often precede the onset of seizures and medication use

It is increasingly clear that **neuropsychiatric comorbidities are evident prior to the onset of observable seizure activity**, or sufficiently soon after onset that they are unlikely to have been caused by seizure activity itself.

Conditions with greater degree present at, before, or soon after onset of seizures

- ADHD
- Depression
- Behavioral problems
- Cognitive difficulties

Neuroimaging of drug resistance in epilepsy



Memory circuit reorganization in the pre-op and post-op periods in drug-resistant TLE

Clinical study

Memory loss and memory reorganization patterns in temporal lobe epilepsy patients undergoing anterior temporal lobe resection, as demonstrated by pre-versus post-operative functional MRI



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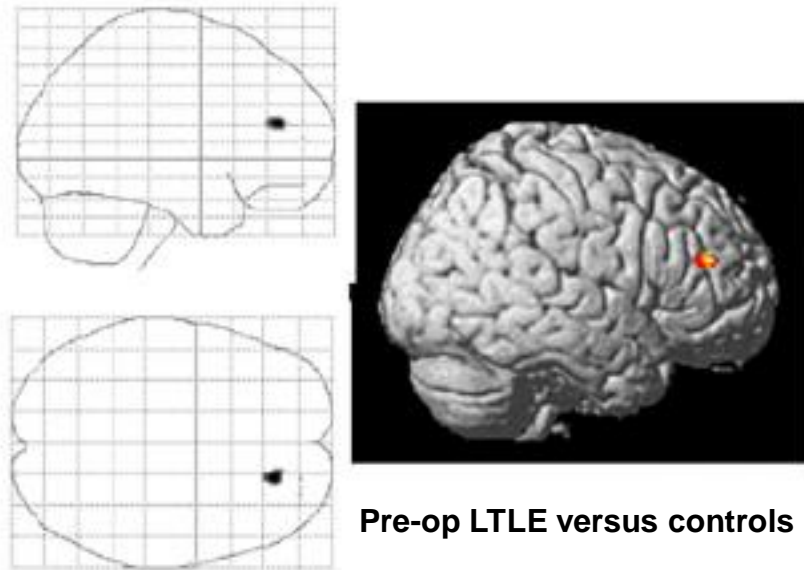
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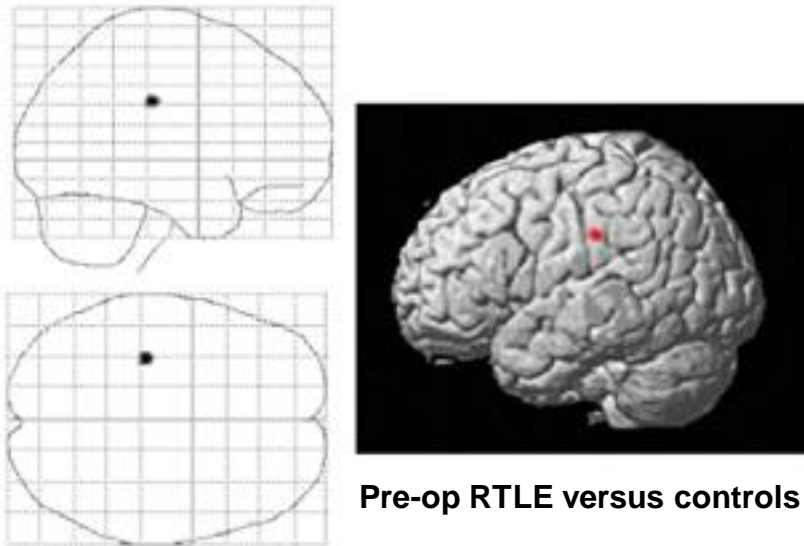
^fDepartment of Psychology, Western University, London, Ontario, Canada



Limotai C et al.; J Clin Neurol 2018



(A)

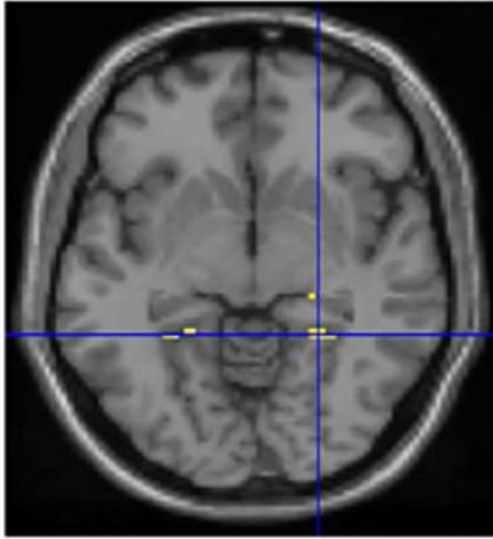


Nineteen patients with medically-intractable TLE (10 left TLE, 9 right TLE) and 15 healthy controls were enrolled

Group analyses were conducted pre- and post-ATL of a **novelty complex scene-encoding paradigm** comparing areas of BOLD signal activations on fMRI

Extra-temporal activations were detected pre-operatively in both LTLE and RTLE, particularly in the frontal lobe

L



(E)

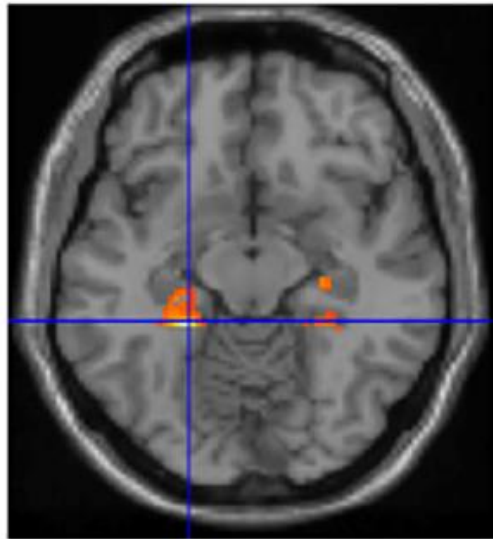
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Pre-op LTLE versus controls

Greater activations also were noted in the contralateral hippocampus and parahippocampus in LTLE and RTLE

Signal changes in the left HC/PHC ($R^2 = 0.513$ ($p = 0.025$) for verbal memory (AdDel score)

L

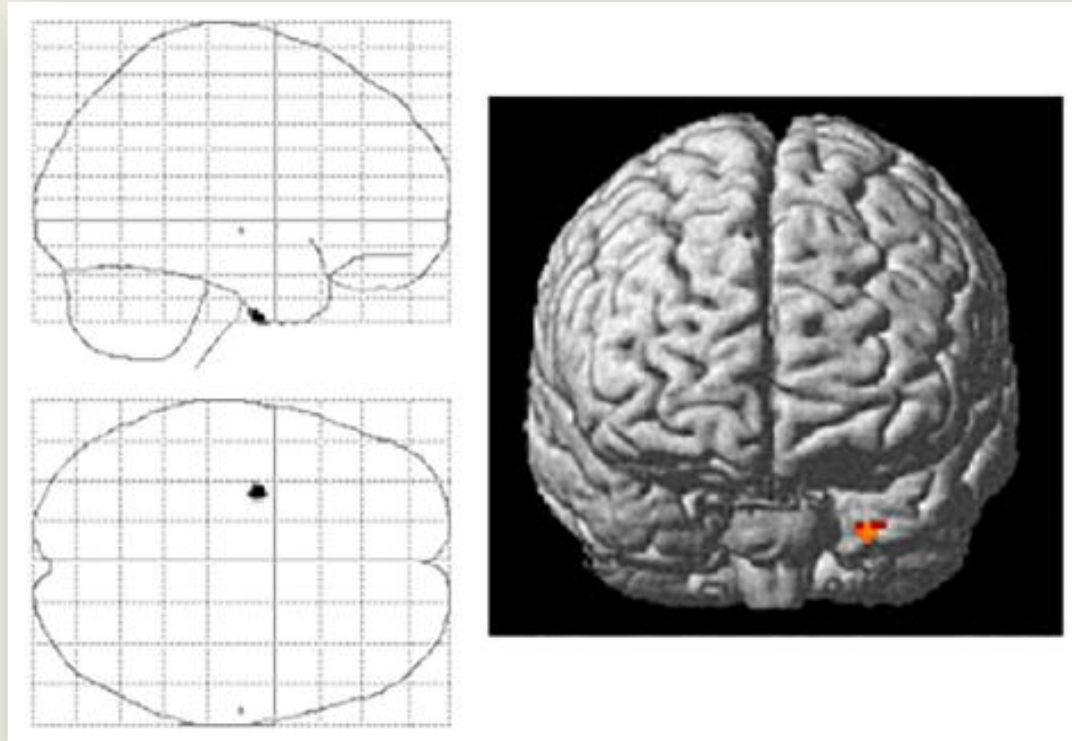


R

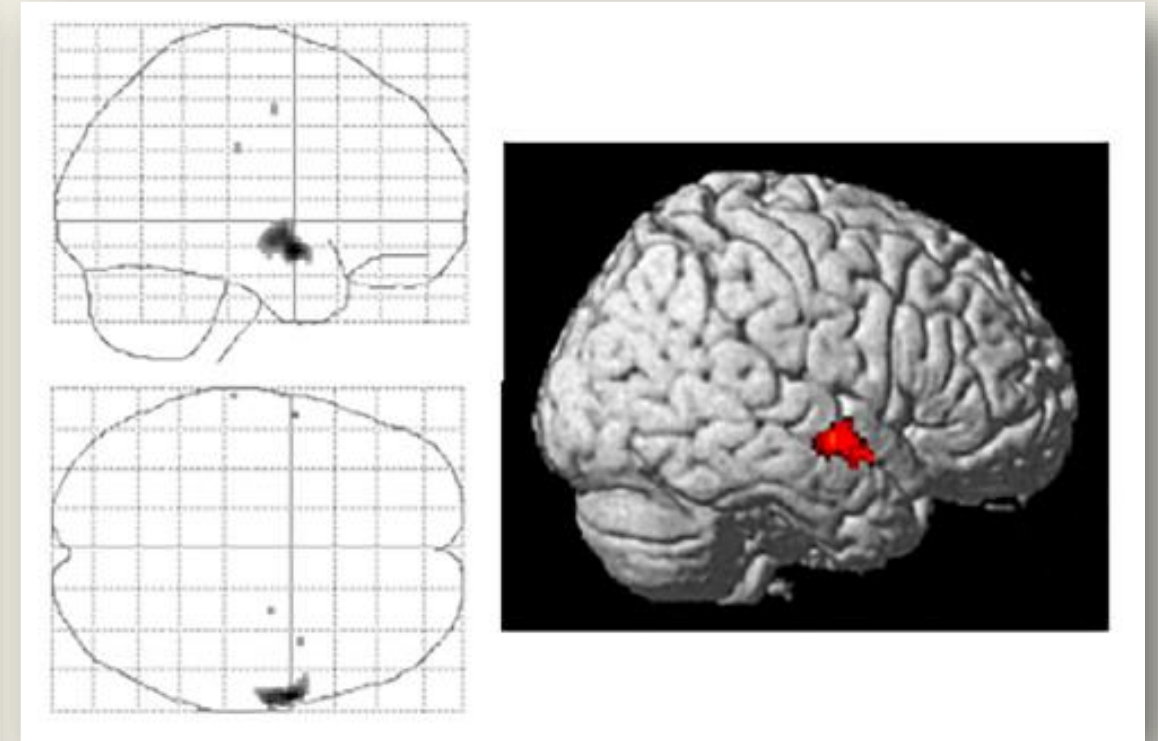
Pre-op RTLE versus controls

fMRI provides evidence for importance of **“Functional adequacy of ipsilateral structures”** rather than functional reserve of the contralateral hemisphere

Whole-brain memory circuit reorganization at post-operative period



LTLE Post-op versus Pre-op



RTLE Post-op versus Pre-op

Pronounced temporal activations, particularly in the ipsilateral temporal area

Thank you

