

DOES EPILEPSY AFFECT THE SEVERITY OF COVID-19?

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Relevance. Studying the influence of epilepsy on the severity of coronavirus infection is topical in light of the current epidemic scenario.

The objective of this study was to examine the severity of COVID-19 disease in epilepsy patients.

Methods. In 2021 in St. Petersburg, we conducted a retrospective open-label observational trial of COVID-19 tolerability, pairing each case with a control one of the same age and sex. Group1 consists of 30 epilepsy patients. 20 individuals were assigned to Group2 (control), comprised of medical staff who had not been diagnosed with epilepsy. A questionnaire supplied took into account infectious and cerebral symptomatology. Everyone completed an informed consent form. The ethics committee gave its approval to the project.

Results. Group1: Epilepsy patients, median age 33 years, male: female patients= 1: 1,5. Group2: mean age – 36 years, men:women=1:1,4. In 40% of cases, generalized epilepsy was present, while in 60% focal epilepsy prevailed. Before COVID-19, 63% were in remission, while 37% had no seizure control. 57% had AED monotherapy, 37% - AED polytherapy, and 6% had no AED. Fever was found in 90% of group1 and 95% of group2 (p=0.6), with low fever in 56% and 36%, respectively, and severe fever in 34% and 60%. Pneumonia affected 13% of group1, 27% of group2 (p=0.3), and headache affected 43% of group1 and 59% of group2 (p=0.1).

Conclusions. The findings revealed that the severity of COVID-19 in epilepsy patients was comparable to that in the population. More research with larger sample size is required.

