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PSYCHIATRIC MORBIDITY AND SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR IN EPILEPSY: A COMMUNITY-BASED CASE-CONTROL STUDY

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Objectives: To provide information about psychiatric comorbidity and suicidal behavior in people with epilepsy compared to those without epilepsy from a community sample in Brazil.

Methods: An attempt was made to evaluate all 174 subjects with epilepsy (cases) identified in a previous community survey. For every case identified, an individual without epilepsy (control) and matched by sex and age was selected in the same neighborhood. A structured interview with validated psychiatric scales was performed. 153 cases and 154 controls were enrolled in the study.

Results: People with epilepsy had more frequently anxiety (39.4% versus 23.8%, OR 2.1 [95% CI 1.2 - 3.5]; $p=0.006$), depression (24.4% versus 14.7%, OR 1.9 [95% CI 1.01 - 3.5]; $p=0.04$) and anger (55.6% versus 39.7%, OR 1.9 [95% CI 1.2 - 3.1]; $p=0.008$). They also reported more suicidal thoughts (36.7% versus 23.8%, OR 1.8 [95% CI 1.1 - 3.1]; $p=0.02$), plans (18.2% versus 3.3%, OR 2.0 [95% CI 1.0 - 4.0]; $p=0.04$) and attempts (12.1% versus 5.3%, OR 2.4 [95% CI 1.1 - 3.2], $p=0.04$) during life than controls.

Conclusions: These findings call attention for psychiatric comorbidity and suicidal behavior associated with epilepsy. Suicide risk assessment, mental evaluation and treatment may improve quality of life in epilepsy and ultimately prevent suicide.