



Report on Epilepsy

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A report “Epilepsy, a public health imperative” has been released by the World Health Organization and leading non-governmental organizations for epilepsy, the International League Against Epilepsy and the International Bureau for Epilepsy.

- In low- and middle-income countries, early death among people with epilepsy is significantly higher than in high-income countries.
- More than 75 percent of people with epilepsy in low-income countries are at risk of premature death, due to lack of access to anti-seizure medicines.

The reasons include possible lack of access to health facilities when seizures are long-lasting or occur close together without recovery in between, and preventable causes such as drowning, head injuries and burns.
- The report states that the treatment gap for epilepsy is unacceptably high, when 70 percent of people with the condition can be seizure-free when they have access to medicines that can cost as little as \$5 per year and can be delivered through primary health systems.
- Roughly half of adults with epilepsy have at least one other health condition. The most common are depression and anxiety.

Around 23 percent of adults with epilepsy will experience clinical depression during their lifetime and 20 per cent will have anxiety.
- Mental health conditions such as these can make seizures worse and reduce the quality of life.

Development and learning difficulties are experienced by 30-40 percent of children with epilepsy.
- Stigma also prevents people from taking treatment.
- The Report states that “political will” facilitates the integration of diagnosis and treatment for epilepsy into the primary health services.

Epilepsy

- Epilepsy is a central nervous system (neurological) disorder in which brain activity becomes abnormal, causing seizures or periods of unusual behavior, sensations, and sometimes loss of awareness.
- Anyone can develop epilepsy. It affects both males and females of all races, ethnic backgrounds and ages.