



## Report on Epilepsy

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.