

Depression twice as likely in seizure sufferers

March 16 2009

A new study published in *Epilepsia* finds that the prevalence of depression is almost twice as high in people with epilepsy compared to the general population. Among those with epilepsy, racial minorities have seven times the odds of depression in comparison to the majority Caucasian population. The findings also show that 40 percent of depressed respondents with epilepsy were not accessing mental healthcare services.

Data from the 2000/2001 Canadian Community [Health](#) Survey was used to determine prevalence of [epilepsy](#) and [depression](#). 13 percent of those with epilepsy were found to suffer from depression, compared to 7 percent of those without the disorder. Epilepsy was also associated with 43 percent higher odds of depression when adjusting for demographic factors. The odds were higher not only for minorities, but also for females, older adults and individuals experiencing food insecurity. Minority status and advanced age appear to be unique risk factors for depression in those with epilepsy, as these factors are not associated with depression in the general population.

Previous research indicates that, on average, individuals with epilepsy suffer from a greater number of chronic conditions, have worse self-reported health and experience increased pain. They are also more likely to have a lower quality-of-life, related to both health and other factors. Individuals with epilepsy have also been found to exhibit higher levels of recent psychological distress, a greater likelihood for a variety of psychiatric conditions and a higher prevalence of suicidal thoughts. Sufferers also typically have lower incomes, less education and are less

likely to have full- or part-time employment.

"Individuals with epilepsy are vulnerable to depression , yet we have identified an important gap in mental health service provision," says Esme Fuller-Thomson of the University of Toronto , co-author of the study. "Routine screening and targeted interventions for depression are needed to help serve those with epilepsy."

Source: Wiley ([news](#) : [web](#))

Citation: Depression twice as likely in seizure sufferers (2009, March 16) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-03-depression-seizure.html>

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