

# What doctors don't know about treating kids with epilepsy

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Survey finds significant gaps in knowledge.

(HealthDay)—Many American doctors lack knowledge about the proper diagnosis and treatment of epilepsy in children, according to a new study.

Researchers surveyed pediatricians, [family doctors](#) and neurologists/neurosurgeons in central Texas to assess whether they were using current best-practice guidelines when dealing with children with [epilepsy](#).

The results showed that many of the participants were misinformed about what constitutes [intractable epilepsy](#) (defined as epilepsy that cannot be controlled with medications), when to refer young patients for surgical evaluation, and what types of seizures may respond to surgical treatment.

In addition to misinformation about surgery, there were significant gaps in knowledge about drug treatment, according to the researchers at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas and Dell Children's Medical Center, in Austin.

The survey respondents were misinformed about when or after how many seizures they should prescribe anti-convulsant drugs for a patient. There was also a lack of knowledge about how many failed attempts at drug treatment should occur before considering another form of therapy that doesn't involve drugs, the study found.

The study was to be presented Monday at the annual meeting of the American Epilepsy Society, in San Diego.

"Observance of practice standards is important in achieving optimal [seizure control](#) and quality of life for [epilepsy patients](#)," study author Dr. Freedom Perkins said in a society news release.

"Early aggressive treatment is essential. But timely and appropriate care is not likely to happen if [health care providers](#) are misinformed. This survey gives us baseline information that can be used to focus educational initiatives for improving provider knowledge," Perkins explained.

Perkins said he did not believe the survey findings were unique to Texas.

Data and conclusions presented at meetings are typically considered preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed medical journal.

**More information:** The Epilepsy Foundation has more about [epilepsy in children](#).

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