

Sexual assault tied to psychogenic nonepileptic seizures in women

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(HealthDay)—Sexual assault trauma may partly explain why women are

more likely to develop psychogenic nonepileptic seizures (PNES), according to a study presented at the annual meeting of the American Epilepsy Society, held virtually from Dec. 4 to 8.

Slavina Goleva, from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, and colleagues reviewed [electronic medical records](#) to determine which of 1,653 medical diagnoses co-occurred with PNES diagnosis.

The researchers identified 3,341 adult PNES patients (prevalence, 0.14 percent). The analysis confirmed previously reported associations with [psychiatric disorders](#), including [posttraumatic stress disorder](#), but yielded novel associations with cerebrovascular disease (odds ratio, 1.08; $P = 2.57 \times 10^{-40}$). There was also a very strong association between PNES and sexual assault trauma (odds ratio, 10.26; $P = 5.36 \times 10^{-146}$). Sexual assault trauma explained nearly a quarter of the association between female sex and PNES.

"These results identify stroke as a possible predictor for PNES and reinforce that people who are experiencing seizures and have psychiatric risk factors should be referred for video-electroencephalogram monitoring to diagnose whether they are experiencing epileptic seizures or nonepileptic seizures," a coauthor said in a statement. "Early diagnosis for patients with PNES is critical, allowing them to begin an appropriate treatment plan while avoiding misdiagnosis with epilepsy and the dangers of inappropriate treatments."

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