

Study: Epilepsy patients benefit from structured 'seizure action plans'

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Senior author Lucretia Long, DNP, an epilepsy nurse practitioner and a clinical associate professor of neurology at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center and College of Medicine. Credit: The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center

A new 16-week study of 204 adult epilepsy patients found that 98% of

participants believe that all patients with epilepsy should have a seizure action plan (SAP), regardless of seizure status.

These plans can help patients with [epilepsy](#) to safely manage [seizure](#) emergencies. But health care providers don't always discuss them with their patients.

Researchers at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center and College of Medicine found that standardizing a structured SAP can help adults with epilepsy safely manage seizures.

Study findings published online today in the journal *Neurology: Clinical Practice*.

"Our work suggests that simple discussions between providers and patients/care-partners of how to manage seizure emergencies with a seizure action plan can increase knowledge and comfort about seizure emergencies," said senior author Lucretia Long, DNP, an epilepsy nurse practitioner and a clinical associate professor of neurology at Ohio State.

Epilepsy is a common neurological condition affecting about 3.4 million adults in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Up to 56% of patients with epilepsy have uncontrolled seizures, despite taking antiseizure drugs. Uncontrolled seizures can result in increased [emergency room visits](#), hospitalizations and time away from work.

"Most seizures occur outside of hospitals. Many patients fear that they could have a seizure at any time, yet don't have a plan. This highlights the need for a standardized educational intervention to help patients better manage seizure emergencies," said co-investigator Sarita Maturu, DO, an epilepsy physician and researcher at Ohio State.

Most [education programs](#) are expensive and require extended time commitments and resources, both of which are barriers for success. In contrast, SAPs are efficient, cost effective, structured education tools used to engage patients and caregivers to actively participate in managing their condition, Maturu said.

Study participants filled out surveys before and after the study. Reminders to complete the plan were shared verbally, via text and email.

"We also educated [health care providers](#) on SAPs, and how to use them during outpatient visits. All five providers agreed that the biggest challenge was their limited time during patients' visits," said Long, whose clinical interests include epilepsy patient education, health care disparities, seizure action plans and women's issues in epilepsy.

Future efforts could focus on incorporating electronic SAP, using process improvement models and creating advance practice provider clinics focused on customizing SAPs, Long said.

More information: Lucretia Long et al, Evaluation of a Seizure Action Plan in an Adult Epilepsy Center, *Neurology Clinical Practice* (2024). [DOI: 10.1212/CPJ.0000000000200275](https://doi.org/10.1212/CPJ.0000000000200275)

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