

Sudden Unexpected Death in Epilepsy in 45 Years of the Department of Forensic Medicine and Criminalistics in Rijeka, Croatia

Ivan Sosa^{1†} Antun Ferencic¹ Drazen Cuculic¹

¹Rijeka University School of Medicine, Brace Branchetta 20, 51000 Rijeka, Croatia

† correspondence to: ivan.sosa@medri.uniri.hr

Objective: While wondering whether is (publishing) epidemiology history, we aimed this study to compare the available data of deaths from epilepsy in the period from 1968 to 2013 from the archives of the Department of Forensic Medicine and Criminalistics in Rijeka, and to determine the basic characteristics of the study group in order to lay the foundations for further research. Aside interest to the forensic audience, this study exposes epidemiology's relationships with other areas of science, their understanding in epidemiological findings and methods of data access.

Patients and Methods: The study includes 26 cases of death due to epilepsy and studies concerning gender and age of the deceased, the number of deaths per year in the period of 45 years, the frequency of deaths by month and place of death.

Conclusion: The analysis of the results and their presentation is trying to determine links that could facilitate further research in the form of definition for the parameters to be taken into account when setting up such a diagnosis. This study quantifies the incidence of SUDEP. Also, our goal was to show the problems of the post-mortem diagnosis of SUDEP.

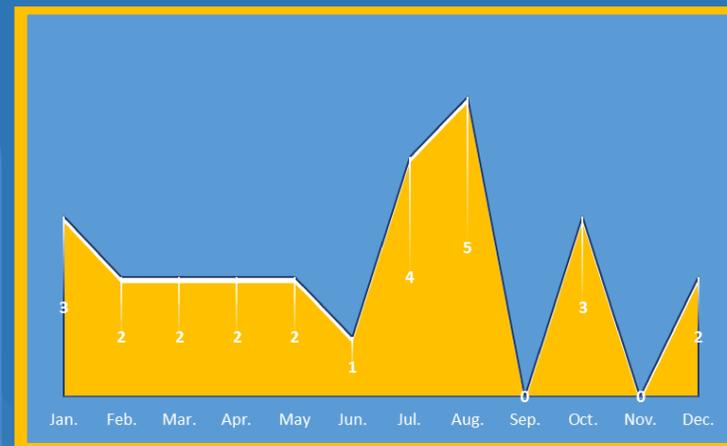


Chart 1. Distribution of SUDEP cases through the months of the year

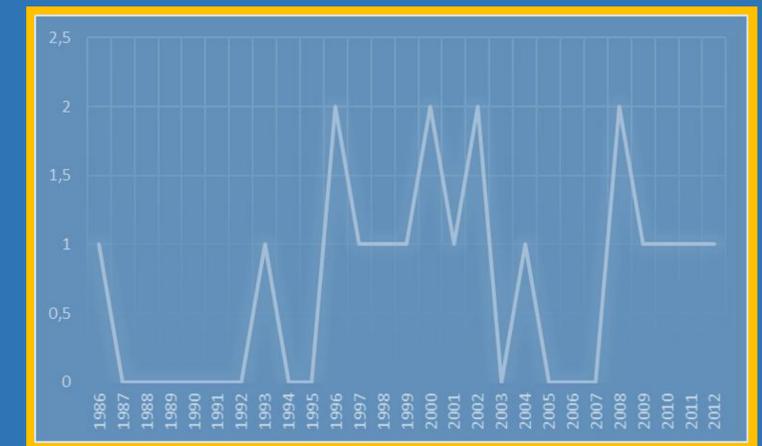


Chart 2. Occurrence of SUDEP in the last 20 years

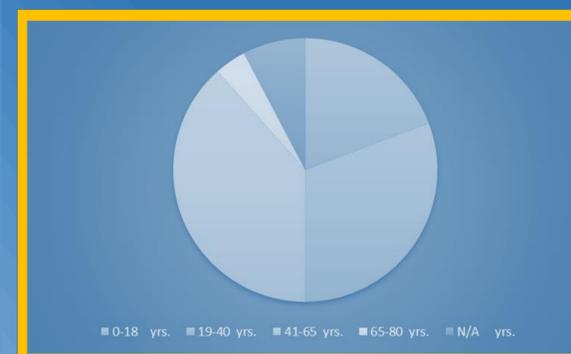


Chart 3. Distribution of SUDEP by age groups

Results: Of all the 26 cases surveyed, 17 (65%) were men, and 9 (35%) females. The most frequent victims were middle aged men [N=18 (68%) aged 19-65 years; 12 males, 6 females], while an equal number of victims were found at the usual place of their residence and outside it. Occurrence of SUDEP doubles in the last 20 years, while their distribution through the year is balanced with a slight increase during the summer season (peak values for the July and August).