

Development of the State of Epilepsy in Africa

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Epileptic Disease is a chronic pathology due to the stereotypical repetition of epileptic seizures. Epileptic disease is one of the most common nervous system diseases in developing countries. Out of the estimated 60 million people in the world suffering from epilepsy, it is estimated that about 80% of the population resides in developing countries, particularly in Africa. African epidemiological studies estimated 10 million people living with epilepsy in this continent. Etiologies and etiological factors are numerous, may be primitive or secondary. Thus, in developing countries, secondary causes predominate and arise from various sources: infectious diseases with cerebral complications, pre- and post-natal obstetric complications, cranial traumas, encephalic tumor processes, and neurovascular pathology.

These findings make epilepsy a real public health problem in Africa: many patients (although underestimated in hospital statistics); the insufficiency or even the absence of national strategies for the prevention, detection and management of epileptics; inaccessibility to antiepileptic drugs for most patients for various reasons (financial, cultural, geographical accessibility); the absence or the very long delays in diagnosis and treatment with a treatment gap estimated at 80% in developing countries by the World Health Organization, the International League Against Epilepsy and the International Bureau for epilepsy, despite the modest cost of some antiepileptic drugs.

Epilepsy, in addition to its serious medico-social consequences (personal, family, academic and socio-professional difficulties), also has a cost. There is very little data on the cost of the management of epilepsy in patients with epilepsy in developing countries.

A good knowledge of the direct and indirect costs of epilepsy would make it possible to quantify the real needs for a good planning of public health actions aimed at improving the management of this condition.

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