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Obstructive sleep apnea in epilepsy: A preliminary Egyptian study

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Purpose: The extent and clinical relevance of the association between epilepsy and sleep apnea are not previously studied in Egypt. What we wanted to know was the frequency of sleep apnea in Egyptian children with epilepsy and its influence on seizure frequency, other seizure characteristics, sleep complaint and architecture.

Methods: All patients with epilepsy aged up to 18 years who underwent polysomnography were studied. Patients with any neurological disease apart from epilepsy with psychiatric illness had hypnotics or sedatives or those with liver or kidney failures were excluded from the study. The patients were divided into two subgroups according to apnea/hypopnea index: Group (1) patients without obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) and group (2) patients with OSA. For control group, we choose 12 healthy individuals with age and sex matched to that of our patients. We studied the clinical characteristics of epilepsy, sleep history and polysomnographic recording of the patients with epilepsy and the control. EEG digital and video monitoring was done for all patients.

Results: Eleven patients (42.3%) were found to have obstructive sleep apnea. Seizure frequency was significantly higher in the patients with OSA. Apart from apnea and hypopnea indices, all other sleep parameters did not differ between patients' subgroups. Hypopnea index in REM positively correlates with number of awaking. Apnea index in REM positively correlates with latency to deep sleep and to periodic leg movement.

Conclusions & Recommendations: Sleep apnea is frequent in patients with epilepsy. OSA may contribute to increase seizure frequency. We recommend investigating sleep apnea in all patients with epilepsy.

Biography

Hala A Shaheen is a Professor in Department of Neurology, Faculty of Medicine, Fayoum University, Fayoum, Egypt.

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