



Memory and Epilepsy

Memory is a natural brain process that allows us to retain the things that we have learned. Seizures affect memory by interfering with attention, which affects the person's ability to input and retrieve information

Causes of Memory Difficulties

- People with underlying causes for their epilepsy have greater memory difficulties. For instance a tumor or lesion can disrupt the memory process.
- If the focus of the seizures is located deep in the temporal lobe near some parts of the brain that are important to the memory process, such as the hippocampus, this may be the cause of the memory difficulties.
- Age of onset combined with the duration of the epilepsy has also been linked to memory performance. Generally the earlier the age of onset and the longer the person has had epilepsy, the greater the risk of memory impairment.
- People with temporal lobe epilepsy are also at risk. Generally people with left temporal lobe epilepsy will experience difficulties with verbal memory, while person with right temporal lobe epilepsy will have difficulties with visual memory.

Medication and memory

- There is evidence that medication can contribute to memory difficulties either directly or indirectly by affecting concentration and processing speed.
- The effect of medication is minimised

by taking one anti-convulsant medication and by keeping the dose within the standard therapeutic range.

Improving Memory

- There are a number of different strategies which can be used to improve memory. Some of these include:
- Reducing the rate at which information is presented.
- Practice new information daily.
- Allow for processing time when requesting a response from a child.
- Focus on one type of information at a time.
- Use diagrams, graphs, and pictures to illustrate information.
- Monitor a child's attending behaviour and refocus if necessary.
- Provide immediate and frequent feedback.

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