

National Epilepsy Month — November 2013

November is National Epilepsy Awareness Month. Epilepsy is a brain disorder characterized by recurrent seizures; it affects approximately 2.3 million adults in the United States (1).

The CDC Prevention Research Centers' Managing Epilepsy Well (MEW) Network includes U.S. universities, the Epilepsy Foundation, and other epilepsy groups (2). The MEW Network works to develop and test programs that improve self-management and quality of life for persons with epilepsy.

Several MEW Network programs are available. WebEase is an Internet-based program (<https://www.epilepsyfoundation.org/livingwithepilepsy/webease/index.cfm>) shown to improve some epilepsy self-management outcomes (3). UPLIFT is an Internet and telephone-based program to treat depression in adults with epilepsy (4), with training for health-care providers available at <http://www.sph.emory.edu/ManagingEpilepsyWell/UPLIFT>. PEARLS is a collaborative-care depression treatment program for adults with epilepsy (5) with training for health-care providers available at <http://www.pearlsprogram.org>. Additional information regarding the MEW Network and related resources (such as webinars and podcasts) is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/epilepsy> and @mewnetwork on Twitter.

References

1. CDC. Epilepsy in adults and access to care—United States, 2010. MMWR 2012;61:909–13.
2. Dilorio C, Bamps Y, Edwards AL, et al. The Prevention Research Centers' Managing Epilepsy Well Network. Epilepsy Behav 2010;19:218–24.
3. Dilorio C, Bamps Y, Walker ER, Escoffery C. Results of a research study evaluating WebEase, an online epilepsy self-management program. Epilepsy Behav 2011;22:469–74.
4. Thompson NJ, Walker ER, Obolensky N, et al. Distance delivery of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for depression: Project UPLIFT. Epilepsy Behav 2010;19:247–54.
5. Chaytor N, Ciechanowski P, Miller JW, et al. Long-term outcomes from the PEARLS randomized trial for the treatment of depression in patients with epilepsy. Epilepsy Behav 2011;20:545–9.

Comorbidity in Adults with Epilepsy — United States, 2010

Epilepsy, a spectrum disorder characterized by recurring seizures, affects approximately 2.3 million U.S. adults (1,2). Epilepsy poses challenges because of uncontrolled seizures, treatment complexity, social disadvantages (e.g., unemployment), and stigma (2,3). Persons with epilepsy are at increased risk for early mortality and for comorbidities that can complicate epilepsy management, increase health-care costs, and shorten the lifespan (2,4–7). Numerous studies have described higher rates of psychiatric comorbidity (e.g., depression and anxiety) in persons with epilepsy (2,7).* However, fewer studies have examined nonpsychiatric comorbidity in a nationally representative U.S. sample of adults with epilepsy. To assess the prevalence of nonpsychiatric comorbidities, CDC analyzed data from the 2010 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS). Adults with epilepsy had a higher prevalence of cardiovascular,

* For example, the prevalence of any mental health disorder in the past 12 months was found to be 23.5% among persons with epilepsy, compared with 10.9% among those without epilepsy, and the lifetime prevalence of suicidal ideation was 25.0% in persons with epilepsy, compared with 13.3% in those without epilepsy (7).

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