LETTERS TO EDITOR

IMPORTANCE OF HEALTHCARE-SEEKING BEHAVIOR OF PARENTS IN RESPONSE TO CHILDHOOD SEIZURES

Sir

The article titled 'Healthcare-seeking behavior after seizures in children by Bavdekar *et al.* has highlighted the important issue of the reaction of the parents in response to any childhood seizures.^[1] The authors say that hardly there is any Indian data on the parents' attitude towards childhood seizures, which is incorrect. An earlier study dated ten years ago had highlighted the importance of the mother's reaction to the child's epilepsy.^[2] Studies of this type in these times need to highlight not only the importance of the parental behavior, but also remedial measures.

The authors did not mention the exclusion criteria for the study. The statistical analysis should have compared the various groups. Mere description of the frequencies does not explain the significance. It has to be seen whether the correlation between the groups is significant or not. Many of the earlier studies focused on many scoring system domains. Item factor analysis, which was missing, should be performed. A *P* value has to be taken into consideration and that is the reason why proper statistical tests should have been undertaken.

The study was described as prospective but no particular duration was highlighted. The income groups are expressed in Indian rupees, which could have been converted to US dollars for easy interpretation by any overseas reader. It is probable that the behavior pattern of the father and mother would vary. An Indian study has shown that mothers exhibit feelings of guilt, rejection and low self-esteem.^[2] Could these feelings be more in mothers than in the fathers? In that case, the results of the present study with 103 mothers and 37 fathers can be questioned.

A thorough search of the literature shows that there are three important research articles by Pal *et al.*, which elaborately describe the seizures, their implications for the families and the predictors of parental adjustment in the Indian scenario.^[2-4] The modified Dunst family support scale was used to measure the social support.^[3] Parental adjustment correlated with satisfaction with social support.^[3] In the present study the correlation could have been tested with an observance of the variables.

Interestingly, a recent study shows that even demographic variables like age, gender, sex and socio economic status were not effective predictors for parenting.^[5] The level of family stress is very important. How the parents reacted to the severity of disease must be described in detail. Obviously, all cases were not serious and the parents did not know how to grade the severity. It is recommended that all the association of child domain factors and the parents' domain factors should be explored while arriving at any conclusion.^[5]

The article concludes by saying that there

is an urgent need for first-aid measures and to impart relevant skills to the parents but the pathways to these are not described clearly. Could we have role-play models, documentaries, pamphlet distribution, and healthcare information in the media to highlight the issue? There is also an urgent need to discard the old traditional, social and religious views. The problem must be tackled effectively and lessons may be learnt from developed countries. Overall, this is an interesting topic, which generates much debate. The authors and the Editor should try to highlight such articles and I would sincerely applaud their sincere efforts.

SRIJIT DAS

Department of Anatomy, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Jalan Raja Muda Abdul Aziz, 50300 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Correspondence:

Dr. Srijit Das, Jalan Raja Muda Abdul Aziz, 50300 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. E-mail: das_srijit23@rediffmail.com

REFERENCES

- Bavdekar SB, Ghule R, Jadhav S. Healthcareseeking behavior after seizures in children. Indian J Med Sci 2008;62:331-5.
- Pal DK, Chaudhury G. Preliminary validation of a parental adjustment measure for use with families of disabled children in rural India. Child Care Health Dev 1998;24:315-24.
- Pal DK, Chaudhury G, Das T, Sengupta S. Predictors of parental adjustment to children's epilepsy in rural India. Child Care Health Dev 2002;28:295-300.
- Pal DK. Epilepsy control in the twenty-first century: Hidden impact on children and families. Child Care Health Dev 2003;29:233-6.
- Chiou HH, Hsieh LP. Parenting stress in parents of children with epilepsy and asthma. Child Neurol 2008;23:301-6.