

Behavioral alterations associated with levetiracetam in pediatric epilepsy

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EPILEPSY & BEHAVIOR

Volumen: 112

Número de artículo: 107472

DOI: 10.1016/j.yebeh.2020.107472

Fecha de publicación: NOV 2020

Tipo de documento: Article

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Abstract

Levetiracetam (LEV) has an improved pharmacological profile and is one of the most commonly used antiepileptic drugs (AEDs). However, associations between this pharmacological profile and behavioral side effects have been extensively reported in pediatric populations. We assessed behavioral changes after initiation of LEV, prescribed by the treating neurologist, in Chilean patients with epilepsy aged 4-15 years. A behavioral questionnaire was applied at baseline and at two, four, and twelve weeks of treatment. Thirty patients were enrolled: 16 males, 14 females, average age 8 years (range: 4-14). By week four, 233% of patients showed significant behavioral alterations that persisted throughout the observation period. No significant alterations emerged after four weeks in the remaining patients. Family history of psychiatric disease and prior behavioral difficulties were predisposing factors for adverse behavioral effects.

Although previous studies associated adverse behavioral effects with LEV in pediatric patients with epilepsy, we believe that this is the first study to use a prospective methodology and standardized tools to quantify the symptomatology. Adverse behavioral effects may significantly affect quality of life for patients and families, diminishing the tolerability of treatment. To ensure successful therapy and improve medical decision-making, it is essential to consider predisposing factors for drug-related adverse effects and to regularly assess for behavioral alterations during treatment. (C) 2020 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Palabras clave

Palabras clave de autor: [Epilepsy](#); [Pediatric](#); [Levetiracetam](#); [Behavior](#); [Adverse effects](#)

KeyWords Plus: [ANTIPILEPTIC DRUGS](#); [ADJUNCTIVE](#)

[LEVETIRACETAM](#); [CHILDREN](#); [ADOLESCENTS](#); [EFFICACY](#); [THERAPY](#); [PROFILE](#); [SAFETY](#)

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Editorial

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USA

Información de la revista

- **Impact Factor:** [Journal Citation Reports](#)

Categorías / Clasificación

Áreas de investigación: Behavioral Sciences; Neurosciences & Neurology; Psychiatry

Categorías de Web of Science: Behavioral Sciences; Clinical Neurology; Psychiatry

Información del documento

Idioma: English

Número de acceso: WOS:000588004200115

ID de PubMed: 33181889

ISSN: 1525-5050

eISSN: 1525-5069