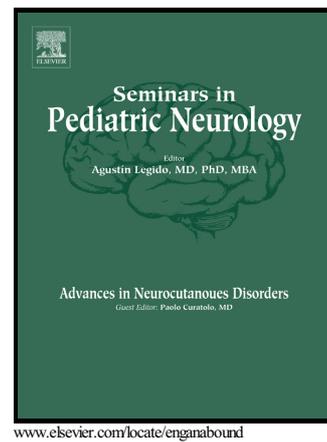


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Cognitive disabilities and long term outcomes in children with epilepsy: a tangled tail

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Abstract

Cognitive problems ranging from mild specific learning problems to profound intellectual disability (ID) are very common in children with epilepsy. For most affected patients there is good evidence that the cognitive problems are present at the onset of seizures and do not deteriorate over time. There is no evidence that a few seizures lead to cognitive deterioration. An exception may occur in children with epileptic encephalopathies, although this contention is not always easy to prove. Intellectual disability is a strong predictor of intractable epilepsy, and the greater the degree of the ID the greater the risk of medication resistant epilepsy. It is not known if specific learning disorders are associated with more severe epilepsy. Rolandic epilepsy is unusual because possibly one-third of patients have transient cognitive and behavioral difficulties during the active phase but later have normal adult social outcome. More longitudinal studies with baseline and repeated cognitive assessments are needed to fully understand the relationship of cognitive problems to childhood onset epilepsy.

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