Topic: Living with epilepsy, how epilepsy affects mental health and vice versa

Abstract:

Júlia: “Our bodies and minds are connected. How we feel physically determines how we are going to feel emotionally. Oppositely, our emotional state often takes on the physical form. After having a seizure, I feel tired and depressed. My bad mood coupled with stress, in return, triggers more seizures. It is a never-ending cycle.

Not only that generalised convulsive seizures are usually what the public associates with epilepsy, they are also often regarded to as “the most harmful ones”, this not exluding the medical community. I perceive this statement as widely untrue, given my experience with the mental fatigue and pain that accompany my so called “petit” seizures. Even though it has been a relatively short time since coming into terms with them, noticing a cloud of slight disregard towards absence and focal seizures is rather something unrare in my life. “You are well off with taking medication as prescribed, these seizures are harmless anyway ”, I am told. What many do not realize, however, is that every type of seizure is harmful, even when on medication. One of more reasons being, seizures impose limits on the patient. This including problems in academical and work settings or intolerable side effects from medication as such. These and many more are affecting patients mentally and are worsening the quality of their lives. I wish to share more on this during the congress.”

Biography: Júlia Schönfeldová, 19 years old, high school student aspiring to study neuroscience and clinical psychology later in university. Her passion towards this field and her desire to be once profesionally helping others struggling with epilepsy and/or mental illness stems from her own experience with idiopathic epilepsy, as well as with psychological disturbances that very unrarely accompany the condition. After 3 hospitalisations, EEGs, CT, MRi done, medication adjustments, she still sometimes struggles with multiple absence and focal seizures during the day and sleep disturbances. Her epilepsy type diagnosis was changed more times and right now it is not specified by doctors.

