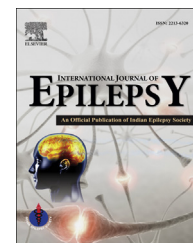


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Editorial

International Epilepsy Day

Epilepsy is a common medical disorder that can have a psychological and emotional impact on people with the disorder and their families. It is an ancient disorder. The earliest detailed account of epilepsy can be found in Charaka Samhita dated 400 BC where epilepsy is being referred as Apasmara which means loss of consciousness and discusses both symptomatology and possible treatments for the same. Acharya Sushruta (600 BC), regarded as the father of surgery, also described various causes of apasmara. Its mention can also be found in British Museum, London as a part of a Babylonian text on medicine, Sakikku (All diseases), which was written over 3000 years ago, i.e. before 1000 BC.¹

Later Hippocrates stated about Epilepsy, “This disease is in my opinion no more divine than any other; it has the same nature as other diseases, and the cause that gives rise to individual diseases. It is also curable, no less than other illnesses unless by long lapse of time it be so ingrained as to be more powerful than the remedies that are applied”.² Both Charaka and Hippocrates believed that epilepsy has natural cause and not a sacred or supernatural one. During 17th and 18th centuries epilepsy was the topic of debate, which led to the development of modern neurology in the 19th century.

Epilepsy is under-recognized and often poorly funded with regard to clinical care and research. Therefore there is poor availability of treatment options for people with epilepsy around the world.

Current world population is approximately 7.28 billion. According to the WHO more than 50 million people worldwide have epilepsy and nearly 80% of the people with epilepsy are found in developing countries where annual new cases are between 40 per 100,000 to 70 per 100,000 people in the general population. In developing countries, this figure is often close to twice as high. The estimated proportion of the general population with active epilepsy at a given time is between 4 per 1000 and 10 per 1000 people. However, some studies in developing countries suggest that the proportion is between 6 per 1000 to 10 per 1000.³

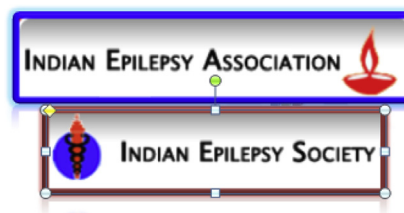
In the Global Burden of Disease Study 2010 survey, of almost 14,000 people from a range of global settings severe epilepsy was rated as having a disability adjusted life years (DALY) of 0.657 and total prevalent cases were 28,300,000.⁴ Disease burden for epilepsy has been evaluated in economic terms by the European Brain Council for the European countries, with data from 2004^{5,6} and 2010,⁷ based on epidemiological and health economic data which amounts to 161 and 212 million euros, respectively.

It is estimated that there are more than 10 million persons with epilepsy in India. Its prevalence is about 1% in our population.⁸ The prevalence is higher in the rural (1.9%) compared to urban population (0.6%).^{9,10} It is estimated in various studies that the overall prevalence of epilepsy in India is 5.59–10 per 1000.^{8,10–12}

Various epilepsy days celebrated across the world are:

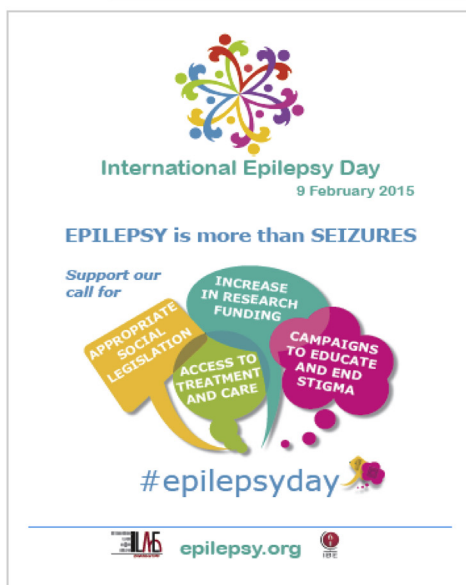
	Region/Country	Date	Organizers
National Epilepsy Day	India	17th November, started in 1991	Started with proposal of Doctors Eddie Bharucha & Piloo Bharucha of Indian Epilepsy Association
Latin American Epilepsy Day	Latin America	9th September, started in 2000	A global campaign against epilepsy of International Bureau of Epilepsy (IBE) & International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE)
National Epilepsy Day	South Africa	21st June, started in 2003	Started by Epilepsy South Africa organization
National Doodle Day for Epilepsy	United Kingdom	1st Friday of February/March, started in 2004	Charity Epilepsy Action as an annual fund raising event
Purple Day	Canada	26th March, started in 2008	Started by Cassidy Megan of Nova Scotia, Canada
European Epilepsy Day	Europe	Started in March 2011 in India Second Monday February, started in 2011	An initiative of the Joint Task Force of IBE and ILAE against epilepsy

The Indian Epilepsy Association (IEA) was registered in 1970. In the late 1960s it was decided by some members of Neurological Society of India (NSI) to form a separate body to address issues related to epilepsy. Dr Anil D Desai, Dr Eddie P Bharucha and Dr Noshir H Wadia went about to form a new society named Indian Epilepsy Association, without disturbing the constitution of NSI. Indian Epilepsy Association was registered on 21st of March 1970 in Bombay. The members of first Governing council were Dr Baldev Singh, Dr B Ramamurthi, Dr TK Ghosh, Dr EP Bharucha, Dr AD Desai, Dr NH Wadia, Dr KV Mathai, Dr KS Mani and Mrs Roshan H Dastur. The first meeting was held on 27th of January 1971 where Dr Baldev Singh was appointed as Chairman, Dr Eddie P Bharucha as Secretary General and Dr (Miss) FN Kohiyar as Treasurer. Initially IEA was affiliated to both IBE and ILAE. However, both IBE and ILAE did not agree for one association to be affiliated to two bodies. Hence an independent body, Indian Epilepsy Society (IES) was formed in 1997 which was affiliated to ILAE. Indian Epilepsy Association continued its affiliation to IBE.



In the General Body Meeting of IEA held at Indore on 16 December 1990, Dr Eddie Bharucha and Dr Piloo Bharucha proposed a nationwide program on one particular day to create awareness. Their proposal was supported by other members and it was finally decided to celebrate 17 November of every year as National Epilepsy Day (NED). From 2015 onwards, the NED will be replaced by International Epilepsy Day.

National Epilepsy Day 2014 was celebrated across the country in Vizag, Kochi, Madhya Pradesh, Jaipur, Uttar Pradesh and Tirupati.



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