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Achievements, challenges, and future perspectives of epidemiologic research in restless legs syndrome (RLS)

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Highlights

- Thus far, most RLS epidemiological research has been cross sectional.
- To advance knowledge, more large prospective cohort studies are needed.
- Epidemiologic research should converge with other RLS advances such as genetics.
- Secondary data sources represent a new, promising area for RLS research.

Abstract

In the 20 years since the initial consensus on a common definition for restless legs syndrome (RLS), over 600 scientific reports on epidemiological aspects of RLS have been published. Most are descriptive and address important issues such as prevalence, familial patterns, comorbidities, and quality of life. While the establishment of prospective cohort studies and the use of secondary data sources are rather new to RLS research, both options significantly broaden the possibilities for analysis of disease risk factors. These two options, as well as the inclusion of a broader phenotyping of individual patients, have great potential to elucidate etiologic factors for RLS and expand knowledge

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