



## Review article

## Population of the ictal-interictal zone: The significance of periodic and rhythmic activity

Emily L. Johnson <sup>\*</sup>, Peter W. Kaplan*The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Department of Neurology, 301 Mason Lord Drive, Baltimore, MD 21224, USA*

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## ABSTRACT

Seizures contribute to patient mortality and are usually treated aggressively. Rhythmic and periodic patterns – the “ictal-interictal continuum” – are often associated with seizures, yet the optimum method of treating these patterns is not known: should they be aggressively suppressed, or monitored without treatment? Understanding which patterns are more strongly associated with seizures and which are highly associated with mortality is important to help the clinician decide how to treat these findings. We present an overview of the etiologies, association with seizures, and mortality of periodic and rhythmic patterns, and one approach to treatment.

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## Contents

1. Introduction . . . . .	108
2. Lateralized periodic discharges (LPDs) . . . . .	109
2.1. Definition . . . . .	109
2.2. Prevalence . . . . .	109
2.3. Etiologies . . . . .	109
2.4. Association with seizures . . . . .	110
2.5. Imaging and supportive tests . . . . .	110
2.6. Outcomes . . . . .	110
3. Bilateral independent periodic discharges (BIPDs) . . . . .	111
3.1. Definition . . . . .	111
3.2. Prevalence . . . . .	111
3.3. Etiologies . . . . .	111
3.4. Association with seizures . . . . .	111
3.5. Imaging . . . . .	111
3.6. Outcomes . . . . .	112
4. Generalized periodic discharges (GPDs) . . . . .	112
4.1. Definition . . . . .	112
4.2. Prevalence . . . . .	112
4.3. Etiologies . . . . .	112
4.4. Association with seizures . . . . .	113
4.5. Imaging . . . . .	113
4.6. Outcomes . . . . .	113
4.7. Triphasic waves . . . . .	113
5. Lateralized rhythmic delta activity (LRDA) . . . . .	113
5.1. Definition . . . . .	113
5.2. Prevalence . . . . .	113
5.3. Etiologies . . . . .	113

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [ejohns92@jhmi.edu](mailto:ejohns92@jhmi.edu) (E.L. Johnson).

- 5.4. Association with seizures ..... 113
- 5.5. Imaging ..... 113
- 5.6. Outcome..... 113
- 6. Generalized rhythmic delta activity (GRDA)..... 114
  - 6.1. Definition ..... 114
  - 6.2. Prevalence ..... 114
  - 6.3. Etiologies ..... 114
  - 6.4. Association with seizures ..... 114
  - 6.5. Imaging ..... 114
  - 6.6. Outcome..... 115
- 7. Stimulus-induced rhythmic, periodic, or ictal discharges (SIRPIDs) ..... 115
  - 7.1. Definition..... 115
  - 7.2. Prevalence ..... 115
  - 7.3. Etiologies ..... 115
  - 7.4. Association with seizures ..... 115
  - 7.5. Imaging ..... 115
  - 7.6. Outcomes..... 115
- 8. Treatment approach..... 116
- 9. Concluding remarks ..... 117
- Conflict of interest ..... 117
- References ..... 117

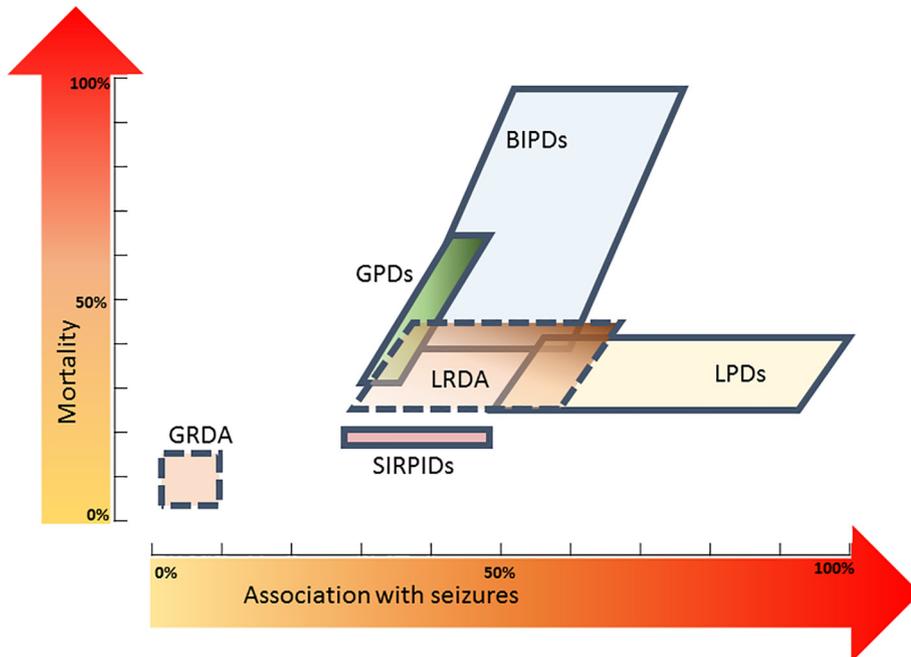
**1. Introduction**

Seizures and status epilepticus carry a high risk of morbidity and mortality. A large seizure burden is associated with unfavorable outcomes after hospitalization; in some settings, every additional hour of seizure recorded on EEG increases the risk of later disability and mortality (De Marchis et al., 2016; Payne et al., 2014). Therefore, recognition of seizures and EEG patterns strongly associated with seizures, is vitally important.

Some EEG patterns are recognizably ictal (i.e., patterns with clinical and EEG improvement after IV AED, epileptic discharges occurring at >2.5 Hz, or those with typical spatiotemporal evolu-

tion (Beniczky et al., 2013)), and some are clearly non-ictal. However, neurophysiologists frequently encounter more ambiguous patterns, with periodic discharges or rhythmic activity found in more than one-third of patients undergoing continuous EEG monitoring in a large multicenter database (Lee et al., 2016). This activity lies on a spectrum now known as the “ictal-interictal continuum (Chong and Hirsch, 2005)” (Fig. 1). These patterns present a challenging management situation, especially in comatose patients.

We will review here the prevalence, etiologies, and outcomes of these patterns (Table 1), as well as an approach to treatment.



**Fig. 1.** Quantitative ictal-Interictal Continuum. This figure (inspired by Chong and Hirsch, 2005) shows the reported relative association with seizures and published mortality of patterns on the ictal-interictal continuum. On the x-axis is increasing association with seizures; on the y-axis is increasing mortality. LPDs = lateralized periodic discharges; BIPDs = bilateral independent periodic discharges; GPDs = generalized periodic discharges; LRDA = lateralized rhythmic delta activity; GRDA = generalized rhythmic delta activity; SIRPIDs = stimulus-induced rhythmic, periodic, or ictal discharges. Mortality rates not available for GRDA and LRDA.

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