Can an epilepsy nurse specialist-led self-management intervention reduce attendance at emergency departments and promote well-being for people with severe epilepsy? A non-randomised trial with a nested qualitative phase

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Record Status
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Citation

Authors' objectives
To (1) describe the characteristics and service use of people with established epilepsy (PWE) who attend the emergency department (ED); (2) evaluate the economic impact of PWE who attend the ED; (3) determine the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of an epilepsy nurse specialist (ENS)-led self-management intervention plus treatment as usual (TAU) compared with TAU alone in reducing ED use and promoting well-being; (4) describe patients’ views of the intervention; and (5) explore their reasons for attending the ED.

Authors' conclusions
At baseline, > 60% of participants who had attended an ED in the previous year had reattended in the same year. In total, 50% of their health service costs were accounted for by ED use and admissions. Low confidence in their ability to manage their epilepsy and a greater sense of stigma predicted frequent attendance. The intervention did not lead to a reduction in ED use but did not cost more, partly because those receiving the intervention had shorter average hospital stays. The most common reason reported by PWE for attending an ED was the lack of someone nearby with sufficient experience of managing a seizure. Those who attended an ED frequently and received the intervention were more likely to report that the intervention helped them. Our findings on predictors of ED use clarify what causes ED use and suggest that future interventions might focus more on patients’ perceptions of stigma and on their confidence in managing epilepsy. If addressed, ED visits might be reduced and efficiency savings generated.

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