

Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog

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Even though almost three million people in the U.S. suffer from seizures, there is still relatively little known about the different types of epilepsy. In fact, many people who do not have epilepsy, or who do not have friends and family members with the condition, may not realize that there are actually different types of seizures and that these types of seizures will often affect people at different ages. The following is a list of different age brackets and the types of seizures most commonly associated with them.

Infancy – Infantile spasms, atypical and benign febrile seizures, myoclonic and atonic seizures

Childhood – Myoclonic and atonic seizures, absence seizures

Adolescence – Myoclonic seizures, generalized tonic clonic seizures, absence seizures

Seniors – Complex partial seizures

Any Age – Generalized tonic clonic seizures and simple or complex partial seizures

Infancy

Infants, as well as children who are a bit older, can suffer from a wide range of seizure types including infantile spasms, which typically affects those who have West Syndrome. This syndrome will generally start during the first four to eight months of life.

Atypical and benign febrile seizures can occur in infants as well. These will generally affect children who are between three months and five to six years old. They are essentially tonic clonic seizures, occurring in 2% to 5% of children and can run in families. If a sibling or a parent suffered from those types of seizures, then the child has a higher chance of suffering as well.

Myoclonic and Akinetic seizures also known as atonic seizures or drop attacks, are another type of seizure in infants. These can happen in older children too. The term atonic means “without tone,” which is exactly what it does to the muscles when the seizure occurs – they lose strength. Akinetic, the other term used for atonic seizures, means “without movement.”

Childhood

Myoclonic and atonic seizures are sudden, single events. While they can occur in infants, they are more prevalent during childhood. Those who have syndromes such as Lennox Gastaut will often have these types of seizures. The child's body loses all muscle control abruptly, which causes the person to fall to the ground and can result in injuries. These are very frightening seizures for the sufferer as well as for his or her family members. They are often very difficult to control and can occur on a daily basis.

Absence seizures are not always easy to notice. When you first see a child undergoing one of these seizures, it can appear as though they are simply daydreaming or staring off into space.

This can cause problems with the child's ability to get through the day properly because they have these "absences" throughout the day.

Adolescence

Juvenile myoclonic epilepsy can create a number of different types of seizures. The adolescent patient may suffer from jerking movements associated with myoclonic seizures. They could also have generalized tonic clonic seizures and even absence seizures.

Seniors

Seniors may suffer from complex partial seizures. These types of seizures will often last between one and two minutes. Complex partial seizures may cause people to wander, pick at their clothing or be unaware of their surroundings without understanding what is happening at the time.

Any Age

Epilepsy is not easily categorized. There are a number of different types of seizures that can affect people at any age such as generalized tonic clonic seizures and simple or complex partial seizures. Since there are so many different types of seizures and conditions that fall under the umbrella of epilepsy, it is important that the research continues to grow and expand medical knowledge.

Sources:

Infants: <http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/1176205-overview>
<http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/infantilepsms/infantilepsms.htm>

Adolescence – <http://www.webmd.com/epilepsy/tc/epilepsy-generalized-tonic-clonic-seizures-topic-overview>

<http://www.epilepsy.com/learn/types-seizures/absence-seizures>

Children -

<http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/En/ResourceCentres/Epilepsy/UnderstandingEpilepsyDiagnosis/TypesofSeizures/Pages/Atonic-Seizures.aspx>

<http://www.epilepsy.com/learn/types-seizures/atonic-seizures>

Seniors - <http://www.epilepsy.com/learn/age-groups/seniors-and-epilepsy/types-seizures-seniors>

<http://www.epilepsy.com/learn/types-seizures/complex-partial-seizures>

Editor's Note: The Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog will be distributed and posted weekly.
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