Fits, Faints and Funny Turns

History

- what activity was he/she doing + what happened first?
- Was the movement repetitive or sustained?
- Any colour change?
- How long it lasted ?
- Could it be interrupted ?
- how long to full recovery?
- Chest pain / palpitations?

Examination

- full neurological exam
- measure head size
- neuro-cutaneous stigmata (eg café au lait)
- vital signs

Investigations

- History all important
- blood sugar
- judicious use of EEG
- neuro-imaging (MRI) if < 2yo or focal seizures

Treatment

antiepileptic medication should usually be started after the second unprovoked seizure

Background

Epilepsy affects 1 in 200 children

Diagnosis is largely based on the history

Rate of misdiagnosis still high

A clear description of the episode is key

Background

Camera/mobile phone video by parents has greatly enhanced our ability to make an accurate diagnosis

Febrile seizures

6m-6years

1 in 20

Fever>38.5

Most simple

Recurrence up if : Delayed / complex first seizure / Family history

Parental education important

Differentials

benign sleep myoclonus / shuddering / self-gratification in infancy

Febrile seizures
Reflex anoxic seizures
Breath –holding
Night terrors
Vasovagal syncope
Migraine
Pseudo-seizures
Long Q-T

References

Paediatrics and Child Health 2009 ; **19**: 199-235

TAKE HOME MESSAGES

The history of an attack is key to diagnosis

Misdiagnosis is quite common

Be aware of differentials

Consider ECG (prolonged QT and WPW)

Summary

Epilepsy is a **clinical** diagnosis with many differentials. Diagnosis rest on the history not the EEG

This algorithm has been produced by the National Paediatric and Neonatology Clinical Programmes. It is aimed at medical, nursing and allied health professionals working in both primary and emergency care settings.

Amendments following suggestions of QIP committee of ICGP . Secondary care denoted in pink

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