

JOINT EVENT

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&
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Children with epilepsy during school years: The necessity of parent – teacher cooperation and the doctor’s roleMatina Kampra¹ and Nikolaos Tzerakis²¹National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece²University Hospital of North Midlands NHS Trust, UK

Aim: This study intends to explore the challenges faced by teachers and parents of children with epilepsy during school years. It also aims to provide useful information about the parent-teacher collaboration for the benefit of the pupils, the families and the school.

Methods: Telephone interviews were conducted based on open-ended questions, with 70 head-teachers from schools from all Greek regions. Furthermore a questionnaire was distributed to 100 Greek schools. Additionally, personal interviews took place with 91 parents of children with controlled epilepsy during their school years. The data were grouped and analyzed with the use of qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Results: 89.9% of the school staff was found to know what epilepsy is. 85.1% of the teachers were informed about pupils’ epilepsy by their parents/caregivers while 63/70 head-teachers declared that parents usually misinform the school staff about their child’s condition. 76/91 parents/caregivers personally informed only the head-teacher about their child’s condition because of fear of social stigma and bullying. 87/91 parents declared that they did not know where to seek help to cope with their child’s illness apart from their doctor. 92.6% of the teachers felt insufficiently trained to deal with a seizure and 96.2% expressed the need for more formal information about epilepsy. 64/70 head-teachers and all the parents/caregivers expressed the need for inclusion of experts like social workers and nurses into the school personnel.

Conclusion: Epilepsy is a condition that affects not only the pupil with the disorder but also his/her family as well as the school staff. For the school personnel, it is very important to cooperate with the pupils’ parents/caregivers in order to handle the child’s condition properly and safely. The doctor’s guidance to the parents is crucial for their communication with the school staff.

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