

# International Conference on **Epilepsy & Treatment**

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## **The challenges of managing Epilepsy is resource poor countries in Africa: Experience from Sierra Leone**

**Radcliffe Durodami Lisk, D Ali, M Tomek and T Mbayo**

Allied Health Sciences in the University of Sierra Leone, UK

In developed countries, epilepsy is accepted as a medical condition and patients submit themselves to the various method of treatment available. Sierra Leone is a small West African country with poor infrastructure and health services. 56% of people with epilepsy believe that epilepsy is caused by demons and witchcraft and seek treatment from traditional healers. It is also widely believed that epilepsy is transferable. We have looked at knowledge, attitudes, and practices of health workers towards epilepsy as well as the impact of epilepsy on school attendance of affected children. We further investigated the co-morbidities of depression and anxiety in our patients. Education, awareness raising and sensitization are important strategies in changing the attitudes of the community and improving service uptake. We have used innovative methods as well as standard media such as radio, television and posters in getting our primary messages across that epilepsy is a manageable medical condition and it is not transferable. With the use of basic antiepileptic drugs and outreach clinics, we have been able to reach thousands of patients throughout the country but a lot more needs to be done.

### **Biography**

Radcliffe Durodami Lisk worked in the College of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences at the University of Sierra Leone and was Associate Professor and Head of Department of Medicine. In 1991-92, he was Visiting Professor of Neurology and the Stroke Fellow at the University of Texas Health Science Centre in Houston. He returned to England in 2002 and was Consultant Neurologist and Epilepsy Lead at Basildon University Hospital. He won a National Health Service Gold award for his work on epilepsy in Basildon. He is now directing a link project on epilepsy between Basildon and Sierra Leone.

[durodamil@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:durodamil@yahoo.co.uk)

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