

Subjective Experiences Associated with Seizures

Results:

Alterations of consciousness are critical factors in the diagnosis of epilepsy and seizure disorders. With this alteration in consciousness, some persons report unusual experiences that resemble mystical experience. This study identified and characterized the subjective experiences associated with seizure activity, using standardized quantitative instruments. More than half the patients in this study recalled some subjective experience in association with their seizures, but none of their descriptions met criteria for mystical experience or for near-death experience. Those few features of mystical or near-death experience that were reported were not associated primarily with temporal lobe function, nor with the right or left side of the brain. Among 100 patients, 7 reported out-of-body experiences associated with their seizures. There were no differentiating traits associated with reports of out-of-body experience, in terms of either demographics, medical history including seizure risk factors and precipitants, seizure characteristics including localization and type of seizure, or neuropsychological functioning including ability to recall subjective experiences associated with their seizures.

Published Works:

Area(s) of Interest:

Mystical experience, out-of-body experience, psychiatry, seizures

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