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Neonatal seizures

Seizures are the most common neurological emergency in the neonatal period and in contrast to those in infancy and childhood, are often provoked seizures with an acute cause and may be electrographic-only. Hence, neonatal seizures may not fit easily into classification schemes for seizures and epilepsies primarily developed for older children and adults. ILAE neonatal seizure classification framework emphasizes the role of electroencephalography (EEG) in the diagnosis of seizures in the neonate and includes a classification of seizure types relevant to this age group. The seizure type is determined by the predominant clinical feature. Many neonatal seizures are electrographic-only with no evident clinical features; therefore, these are included in the proposed classification. Clinical events without an EEG correlate are not included. Because seizures in the neonatal period have been shown to have a focal onset, a division into focal and generalized is unnecessary. Seizures can have a motor (automatisms, clonic, epileptic spasms, myoclonic, tonic), non-motor (autonomic, behavior arrest), or sequential presentation. The classification allows the user to choose the level of detail when classifying seizures in this age group.