



Serving Persons  
Affected by Epilepsy

NOVEMBER 2005

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 11



# hotline

## Links Between Epilepsy, Suicide and Depression Researched

### Brain Mechanism: Epilepsy and Suicide May Be Intertwined

Researchers have found evidence that the brain dysfunction that underlies epilepsy may also determine whether people are at risk of suicide.

The study published in the journal *Annals of Neurology* also suggests that depression and suicide may have different brain mechanisms.

It had been commonly assumed by researchers that the difficulties associated with living with epilepsy could provoke depression and, in some cases, an increased risk of suicide. However, the researchers in this new study said that it is harder to explain the opposite findings, that people who develop depression have a higher risk of later experiencing a first seizure.

The researchers compared data for both epilepsy and depression in 324 people with epilepsy and 647 without the condition. They found that a history of depression increased the risk of epilepsy, but the researchers were surprised to find that people with epilepsy were four times more likely to have attempted suicide before ever having a seizure, even after other factors were taken into account like drinking alcohol, having depression, age, and gender.

The individual presence of other symptoms of depression, whether common (e.g., depressed mood) or more rare (e.g., weight change) did not predict a greater likelihood of later seizures.

While this finding, the researchers claim, suggests common underlying brain mechanisms for suicidal behavior and epilepsy, the results also suggest that depression and suicidal behavior may be related to different mechanisms.

Lead researcher Dr Dale Hesdorffer, of the Gertrude Sergievsky Center at Columbia University, said:

"One question we had was whether some symptoms of depression were more important than others for increasing the risk for developing epilepsy. Suicidal thoughts and suicide attempt were possibilities, because people with epilepsy seem to be more likely to commit suicide than the general population. But we looked at all symptoms of depression.

"For reasons that are not understood, depression both increases the risk for developing epilepsy and is also common among people with epilepsy who experience many seizures."

"Increasingly, clinicians treating people with epilepsy ask about current depression, but they may not ask about past suicide attempt or suicidal thoughts. Our results may alert clinicians to the need to ask this question and offer any needed counseling to prevent the occurrence of later completed suicide."

⇨ EPILEPSY ACTION

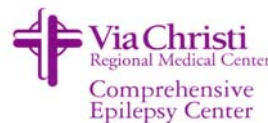
## Via Christi Epilepsy Center to Present Surgery Study Outcomes in D.C.

### American Epilepsy Society Annual Meeting

The Via Christi Comprehensive Epilepsy Center (VCCEC) in Wichita has been asked to present Outcome Data on Temporal Lobe Resection (Epilepsy Surgery) at Tertiary Care Community Hospital in Kansas at the Annual Meeting of the American Epilepsy Society in Washington, DC on December 5th.

The annual meeting of the American Epilepsy Society is attended by epilepsy specialists from around the world.

Epilepsy surgery is performed in about 100 hospitals in the US designated by the National Association of Epilepsy Center (NAEC) as level III and IV epilepsy centers.



Traditionally, these complex procedures are performed at large university academic centers.

VCCEC is one of the few community hospitals in the US having an active surgical program of such

and the outcomes of which are being asked to be presented at the annual meeting of the American Epilepsy Society.

The Outcome Data from Wichita to be presented includes:

- Between 2002 and 2003, 33 patients underwent epilepsy surgery at VCCEC. Patients had failed an average of 7 seizure medications and they were on an average of 2 seizure medications at the time of surgery,
- Patients had an average of 18 seizures per month prior to surgery. 31 of 33 (93%) patients became seizure free or have significant seizure reduction (Engel Class I surgical outcome) at average follow up duration of 6 months.
- 30 of 33 (90%) patients are gainfully employed or attending school/college as of last clinic follow up.
- 27 of the 31 (87%) adult patients who were not able to drive before surgery are now driving.
- The outcome of epilepsy surgery performed at community hospital in Kansas are comparable to those at large academic centers in other parts of US.
- Patients had waited for an average of 22 years before being referred to VCCEC for evaluation of their seizures!

VCCEC currently serve over 1000 epilepsy patients from 76 counties in Kansas and 6 other states. VCCEC is the only hospital in the state of Kansas to offer epilepsy surgery; and designated as having a level IV epilepsy center (highest level of epilepsy service) in the state and surrounding regions by the NAEC.



# share hope!

A FREE epilepsy awareness concert

## david m. bailey

in concert

Friday, November 11, 2005

7:00 p.m. (doors open @ 6:30)

Westside Christian Church  
1819 W. Douglas ■ Wichita

Epilepsy Resource Connection and Cyberonics, Inc., proudly present a free epilepsy awareness concert with David M. Bailey — an award winning, best-selling folk singer, and prophet with a guitar. . .

. . . helping shatter the darkness for the 2.7 million people with epilepsy.

Open to the public, come early for best seating.

For more information call 316-943-2453.

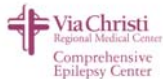


Supported by an educational grant from:

VAGUS NERVE STIMULATION



GOLD SPONSORS:



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## Adult Epilepsy Support Group

Meets Second Tuesday of Month at 6:30 PM  
2919 W. 2nd Street, Wichita (943-2453)

NOV 8: DIET & SEIZURES DEC 13: ERC LIGHTS TOUR!

The ARC of Sedgwick County  
2919 W. 2nd St  
Wichita, KS 67203

Phone: 316-943-2453

Fax: 316-943-3292

E-mail: [ERC@arc-sedgwickcounty.org](mailto:ERC@arc-sedgwickcounty.org)

Web: [www.arc-sedgwickcounty.org/erc.html](http://www.arc-sedgwickcounty.org/erc.html)



david m. bailey epilepsy awareness concert  
Nov. 11th 7:00 pm **free!**  
1819 W. Douglas

## Heights HS Drama Students to Assist ERC

### Students to Perform School Alert Puppet Shows

ERC is very excited to have Mr. Stuart Graham's Wichita Heights High School drama students involved with The Epilepsy School Alert Program. The students will assist with our puppet shows for elementary aged students. The program is free to all Sedgwick County schools.

Heights Junior, Lindsey Zavadil, (pictured at far left) found our puppeteer volunteer listing with the United Way of the Plains and contacted ERC about the Heights students assisting our program.



United Way of the Plains and contacted ERC about the Heights students assisting our program.

Epilepsy is the world's most common and serious neurological disorder. Yet many people suffer even more from public attitudes and other prejudices—than from their seizures.

The School Alert puppet show teaches students about epilepsy first aid, acceptance and diversity. It is one of the primary ways ERC attempts to eliminate stigma related to seizures.

We are thrilled to have the Heights students involved and applaud their dedication to community service. To schedule a school alert program or for more information, call 943-2453.

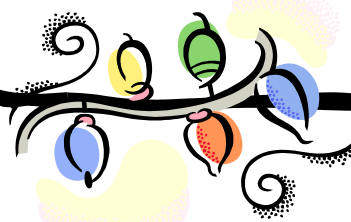


## 2005 ERC Holiday Lights Tour

Tuesday, December 13th 7:00 PM

Register by DEC 6  
943-2453

Join us for a tour of the Holiday Lights hot spots, cocoa & coffee, and holiday fun!



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