The uncommon causes of status epilepticus: A Systematic Review

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Summary
This paper reports the first systematic review of uncommon causes of status epilepticus reported in the literature between 1990 and 2008. Uncommon causes are defined as those not listed in the main epidemiological studies of status epilepticus. 181 causes were identified. These were easily categorised into five specific aetiological categories: immunological disorders, mitochondrial disorders, infectious diseases, genetic disorders and drugs/toxins. A sixth category of ‘other causes’ has also been included. Knowledge of these causes is important for clinical management and treatment, and also for a better understanding of the pathophysiology of status epilepticus.

Contents

Introduction .............................................................................................................. 112
Search strategy and selection criteria .................................................................................... 112
Results ................................................................................................................... 112
Immunological disorders ............................................................................................. 113
Paraneoplastic encephalitis ................................................................................... 113
Hashimoto’s encephalopathy ................................................................................. 113
Anti-NMDA receptor encephalitis .......................................................................... 113
Mitochondrial disorders ............................................................................................. 113
POLG1 mutations ............................................................................................. 113
MELAS ........................................................................................................ 114
Infectious diseases .................................................................................................. 114
Cat-scratch disease encephalopathy .......................................................................... 114
HIV and HIV related disorders ............................................................................. 114

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Introduction

Status epilepticus (SE) is a devastating neurological condition with a high morbidity and mortality if not treated immediately, with the mortality ranging from 7.6% to 43% (Chin et al., 2004).

The aetiology of SE plays an important role in determining its prognosis (Neligan and Shorvon, 2010; Rossetti et al., 2002). While the common causes of SE have been extensively studied (DeLorenzo et al., 1996; Wu et al., 2002), the same cannot be said for uncommon causes. In large hospital or population-based studies, the lists of uncommon causes (typically causes occurring at a frequency of <1%) are not presented, and the literature typically includes only case reports or small case series.

In this study, we aimed: (i) to identify all uncommon causes or uncommon conditions in which status epilepticus has been reported in the literature over a 20-year period; (ii) to categorise these; (iii) to assess where possible the extent to which treatment aimed at the underlying cause will alleviate the SE; (iv) to assess to what extent a consideration of these causes throws light on the mechanisms underlying the precipitation of status epilepticus. A brief summary of the some of the conditions in which SE is particularly prominent or characteristic feature is also given.

Search strategy and selection criteria

We defined SE as ‘an acute epileptic condition characterized by continuous seizures (partial or generalized, convulsive or nonconvulsive) for at least 30 min, or by 30 min of intermittent seizures without full recovery of consciousness between seizures’ (Wasterlain & Chen, 2006). In this study, we have defined an ‘uncommon cause’ as ‘a cause of SE not reported (or not included in a separate category because they were so rare, typically <1% of causes) in the major epidemiological studies of SE (Chin et al., 2006; Coeytaux et al., 2000; DeLorenzo et al., 1996; Hesdorffer et al., 1998; Knake et al., 2001; Vignatelli et al., 2003; Wu et al., 2002). We chose this essentially operational definition in view of the absence of any incidence or prevalence figures on most of the conditions identified. Thus, ‘uncommon causes’ are defined as those other than:

1. Cerebrovascular diseases.
2. CNS infections.
   a. typical bacterial meningitis;
   b. viral encephalitis including JE encephalitis, herpes simplex encephalitis, Human Herpes virus 6;
   c. cerebral toxoplasmosis;
   d. tuberculosis and
   e. neurocysticercosis.
3. Intracranial tumours (both primary and secondary, benign or malignant).
4. Head trauma.
5. Alcohol related.
6. Withdrawal of or low levels of antiepileptic drugs.
7. Hypoxia/anoxia related.
8. Metabolic disturbances (electrolyte imbalances, glucose imbalance, organ failures, acidosis).

We identified relevant papers for this review by searches on PubMed, MEDLINE and Web of Science using the search terms “status epilepticus”, “epilepsia partialis continua”, and “causes”, “aetiology”, “uncommon”, “rare” between 1990 and 2008. Articles were also identified through searches of the authors’ own files. Only papers published in English were reviewed. Papers accepted were confined to those fulfilling the definition of ‘uncommon causes’.

A total of 1931 articles were identified from PubMed. Of these, 56 articles were excluded as they were animal studies; 332 review articles were excluded; 986 articles were not relevant to the subject; 105 articles described cases with common causes. Thus a total of 450 articles were accepted, with a further 61 accepted articles identified through cross-referencing. A total of 300 articles were identified from Web of Science database. However, only 2 additional articles were accepted. Thus in total, 513 articles were accepted for this study. In some of these papers, ‘status epileptics’ was not defined (for instance in terms of duration), and in such papers we accepted the diagnosis met our criteria.

Results

181 uncommon causes of SE (defined above) were identified from the search in 588 articles reviewed. It proved
possible to place these into 5 categorical groups — immunological disorders (Table 1), mitochondrial disorders (Table 2), infectious diseases (Tables 3 and 4), genetic disorders (Table 5), drugs and toxins (Table 6), and also a final group comprising causes not listed in the first 5 categories (Table 7).

**Immunological disorders**

SE was an important symptom in a variety of different immunological disorders (Table 1).

**Paraneoplastic encephalitis**

Paraneoplastic encephalitis is a rare cause of SE. It occurs predominantly in adult females with the typical semiology being epilepsy partialis continua (EPC) or nonconvulsive SE (NCSE) (Kinirons et al., 2006; Koide et al., 2007; Shavit et al., 1999; Weimer et al., 2008; Yang et al., 2006). Other common clinical features include dysautonomic features, palatal signs. Seizures may precede the onset of SE (Weimer et al., 2008).

Control of SE relies on treatment of the underlying aetiology with chemotherapy (Shavit et al., 1999; Kinirons et al., 2006), tumour resection (Weimer et al., 2008; Yang et al., 2006) or a combination of both (Koide et al., 2007).

**Hashimoto’s encephalopathy**

Reports of cases of SE in Hashimoto’s encephalopathy were mainly in adult females (Ferlazzo et al., 2006; Janes et al., 2004; Striano et al., 2006; Tsai et al., 2007). A prior history of seizures was noted in 2 cases (Striano et al., 2006; Tsai et al., 2007). Generalized convulsive SE (GCSE) was the commonest form of SE, while recurrent SE was rarely reported (Ferlazzo et al., 2006). Cases were either euthyroid or hypothyroid.

Control of SE was poor with antiepileptic drugs, while aggressive steroid therapy using intravenous methylprednisolone for 3–5 days followed by oral steroids produced dramatic recovery. Death has been reported due to refractory status (Striano et al., 2006).

**Anti-NMDA receptor encephalitis**

Anti-NMDA-receptor encephalitis affects predominantly young females (91%; median age 23 years) and may be associated with an underlying ovarian tumour (53%) (Dalmau et al., 2008). Starting with a prodrome of headache, low-grade fever, or a non-specific viral-like illness, it progresses to prominent neuropsychiatric symptoms, seizures, dyskinesias and later central hypoventilation and autonomic instability. SE occurred in 8 of the 100 cases identified. The condition is treatment responsive — 75% of patients recovered with 47% achieving full recovery, although a characteristic feature during recovery is a persisting amnesia of the disease process.

Treatment included tumour resection or immunotherapy (steroids, immunoglobulins, plasma exchange or chemotherapy with cyclophosphamide or rituximab) and the response to treatment appeared to be associated with the timing of tumour diagnosis.

**Mitochondrial disorders**

SE is a prominent feature of a number of uncommon mitochondrial disorders (Table 2).

**POLG1 mutations**

POLG1 mutations have recently gained much attention and to date, 2 clinical syndromes have been associated with SE. Alpers disease, a disease of early childhood and only recently linked with POLG1 mutations (Naviaux and Nguyen, 2005), features focal SE (EPC or myoclonic) as its usual presenting symptom, preceded by an infectious illness and ending with refractory seizures. Other clinical features include episodic psychomotor regression and liver failure. The mean duration from time of presentation to death is 12 months, with liver failure as the fatal event (Narkewicz et al., 1991; Nguyen et al., 2005).

The second clinical syndrome is associated with the A467T and W748S POLG1 mutation (Tzoulis et al., 2006). Both epilepsy and SE are common features, whereby there was a predilection for occipital seizure phenomena includ-
and Anton-Babinski syndrome (Alemdar et al., 2007; Leff et al., 1998). Mortality was reported in 7 cases — and in one series, all 4 cases died as a result of SE (Feddersen et al., 2003; Leff et al., 1998), SPSE (Nakamura et al., 2000), or GCSE (Alemdar et al., 2007; Liou et al., 2000). Associated clinical features were due to the underlying disease — these include hemiparesis and hemianopia due to stroke-like episodes, sensorineural deafness, migraine, speech or visual disturbances (Alemdar et al., 2007; Crimmins et al., 1993; Feddersen et al., 2003; Leff et al., 1998).

With the exception of cases of NCSE which showed good response to standard AED treatment, prognosis is generally poor. Neurological sequelae noted include dysphasia, cortical blindness, hemiparesis, myoclonus, dementia, deafness and Anton-Babinski syndrome (Alemdar et al., 2007; Leff et al., 1998; Peterus et al., 1997). Mortality was reported in 7 cases — and in one series, all 4 cases died as a result of SE (Huang et al., 2002).

Infectious diseases

SE is a prominent feature of a number of less common infectious diseases (Table 3), in addition to those listed in the major epidemiological studies.

### Table 3: Infectious disease as uncommon causes of SE (see Supplementary Table 1 for additional references).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Atypical bacterial infections</th>
<th>Viral infections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Bartonella/Cat-scratch disease</td>
<td>1. HIV and HIV related infections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Neurosyphilis</td>
<td>2. Arboviruses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Coxiella burnetti (Q fever)</td>
<td>3. Progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (JC virus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Scrub typhus</td>
<td>5. Varicella encephalitis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Shigellosis</td>
<td>6. SSPE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Chlamydia psittaci</td>
<td>7. Measles encephalitis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The table lists infectious agents that can cause SE, including those listed in Table 3. Additional references for these conditions are provided in the supplementary material (Franca et al., 2005).

### Cat-scratch disease encephalopathy

Cat-scratch disease (CSD) is a seasonal infection affecting children and caused by a pleomorphic gram-negative bacillus, *Bartonella henselae* (Goral et al., 1994). Between 0.17% and 2% of cases manifest as CSD encephalopathy (Carithers and Margileth, 1991). SE associated with CSD encephalopathy is predominantly GCSE. Common clinical features include fever, regional lymphadenopathy, and skin excoriation. (Armengol and Hendley, 1999) while uncommon features include transient postictal combative behaviour, hemiparesis, tremor and chorea (Hadley et al., 1995; Yagupsky and Sofer, 1990).

Treatments given include antiepileptic medications, antibiotics (Ceftriaxone, Gentamicin or Amoxycillin) and acyclovir. 2 cases were refractory to antiepileptic drugs (Hahn et al., 1994; Yagupsky and Sofer, 1990), while 1 case was given steroids and mannitol (Ashkenasi et al., 1993). All cases recovered from their illnesses; partial epilepsy was reported as a neurological sequelae (Hahn et al., 1994).

### HIV and HIV related disorders

New onset seizures have been reported in 4—11% of HIV seropositive patients, and of these, 8.1—18% develop SE (Lee et al., 2005; Van Paeschen et al., 1995; Wong et al., 1990). Both seizures and SE may be due to a variety of causes (Table 4). The commonest SE semiology is GCSE, occurring in 62.5—100% of cases (Van Paeschen et al., 1995). NCSE has also been reported (Wong et al., 1992) while EPC usually occurs in association with concurrent progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML) (Bartolomei et al., 1999; Ferrari et al., 1998). Concurrent hypomagnesemia and renal failure appears to increase the risks of convulsive SE (Van Paeschen et al., 1995).

SE was responsive to benzodiazepine treatment with or without the addition of phenytoin (Lee et al., 2005). Low average CD4 counts and the duration of SE are poor prognostic factors associated with high mortality (Lee et al., 2005).
Uncommon causes of status epilepticus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4</th>
<th>Aetiology of SE in patients with HIV.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Opportunistic CNS infections  
(Toxoplasma infections, cryptococcal meningitis, cytomegalovirus infections, HSV infections, other infections) | |
| Associated structural lesions  
CNS tumours (lymphoma), acute stroke, CNS trauma | |
| Metabolic abnormality  
(Hyponatremia, hypomagnesemia, hypocalcemia, renal impairment) | |
| Alcohol withdrawal | |
| Drug related  
Antiretroviral drugs toxicity, withdrawal of AEDs | |
| Non-specific HIV disease (primary HIV infection) | |

References: (Lee et al., 2005; Van Paesschen et al., 1995).

Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease

Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease is a disease of mutated prion proteins. A rapidly progressive dementia with behavioural abnormalities, cerebellar dysfunction and a typical myoclonus constitutes its common presentation. SE is an uncommon presentation, mostly associated with the sporadic form of CJD and tends to present late in the disease process (Neufeld et al., 2003; Rees et al., 1999). The majority of cases have been GCSE or NCSE (Cokgor et al., 1999; Neufeld et al., 2003; Rees et al., 1999) with EPC rarely reported (Parry et al., 2001).

Cortical or subcortical signal changes as well as cerebral atrophy have been noted on MRI studies. EEG findings include the characteristic periodic sharp waves (PSWs), pseudoPSWs, PLEDs, variable sharp waves and in 1 case, stimulus-induced rhythmic periodic or ictal discharges (SIR-PIDS) (Rossetti and Dunand, 2007).

SE was universally refractory to AED therapy, and time from SE presentation to death ranged from 2 weeks to 3.5 months (Cokgor et al., 1999; Neufeld et al., 2003; Rees et al., 1999).

Genetic disorders

SE is a common feature of a number of rare genetic disorders (Table 5).

Angelman syndrome

Of the 5 known genetic defects associated with Angelman syndrome, only cases with de novo deletions have reported occurrences of SE (Uemura et al., 2005; Valente et al., 2006). It is a common phenomenon (33.3—90.1%) (Ohtsuka et al., 2005; Sugimoto et al., 1992), presenting in children between 13 and 24 months and (Valente et al., 2006; Laan et al., 1997) frequently manifests as an atypical absence SE.

The seizures tend to fizzle out with age and treatment, with seizure freedom achieved at 8 years in a Japanese series (Ohtsuka et al., 2005). VPA and clonazepam were reported to be the most effective AEDs (Galvan-Manso et al., 2005). Other clinical aspects of the disease, however, remain persistent and most cases eventually develop severe mental retardation, behavioural problems, and motor dysfunction.

Porphyria

The porphyrias are a group of metabolic disorders affecting the haeme biosynthesis pathway due to specific enzyme defects. 2 forms of porphyrias have been associated with SE – the acute intermittent porphyrias (AIP) and acute hepatic porphyrias (AHP) (Bhatia et al., 2008; Zaatreh, 2005). All reported cases were convulsive in semiology, 2 of which had an underlying history of epilepsy and recurrent SE. 1 patient developed refractory SE in pregnancy which ended following termination.

Treatment options are difficult as most first line antiepileptic drugs are propyrophenogenic (Bhatia et al., 2008). AEDs successfully used in treating SE are levetiracetam, gabapentin and propofol (Bhatia et al., 2008; Zaatreh, 2005).

Drugs/toxins

SE is also a prominent feature of a number of rare toxic exposures (Table 6).

Antiepileptic drugs

Tiagabine (TGB), a nipecotic acid analogue, has been implicated in the causation of status epilepticus (Kellinghaus et al., 2002) particularly nonconvulsive status epilepticus, even in patients without a prior diagnosis of epilepsy (Jette et al., 2006; Vollmar and Noachtar, 2007). It is thought to be pro-convulsant due to stimulation of presynaptic GABA<sub>4</sub> receptors which in turn inhibits the inhibitory postsynaptic potential mediated by GABA<sub>4</sub> receptors (Chan and Yung, 1999; Kellinghaus et al., 2002; Leikin et al., 2008). In a review of the safety data of TGB from clinical trials, the authors concluded that treatment with TGB at recommended doses did not increase the risk of status epilepticus in patients with partial seizures (Shinnar et al., 2001). However, Koepp et al. estimated the annual incidence of TGB induced NCSE at 6.7% per TGB treatment year and concluded that patients on TGB are at higher risks of developing NCSE compared to non-TGB users (Koepp et al., 2005). GCSE have also been reported and appears to be related to toxic ingestion (Leikin et al., 2008). The main EEG finding was generalized spike wave discharge (Koepp et al., 2005; Shinnar et al., 2001).

Clinical improvement was seen with a combination of either reduction or withdrawal or TGB with or without acute

Uncommon causes of status epilepticus

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Table 5</th>
<th>Rare genetic disorders associated with status epilepticus</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jacobs et al., 2008</td>
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<td>Eliasson et al., 2002</td>
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<td>Kellinghaus et al., 2002</td>
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<td>Shinnar et al., 2001</td>
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</table>

References: (Lee et al., 2005; Van Paesschen et al., 1995).
Table 5  Status epilepticus due to genetic diseases (103) (see Supplementary Table 2 for additional references).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chromosomal aberrations</th>
<th>Malformations of cortical development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ring chromosome 20</td>
<td>1. Focal cortical dysplasias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Angelman syndrome</td>
<td>2. Hemimegalencephaly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. XLMR syndrome</td>
<td>5. Schizencephaly</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Ring chromosome 17</td>
<td>Neurocutaneous syndromes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Sturge Weber syndrome</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Tuberous sclerosis</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Dravet syndrome</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Familial hemiplegic migraine</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Progressive myoclonus epilepsies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Infantile onset SCA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. Wrinkly skin syndrome</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. Neurocutaneous melanomatosis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7. Neuroserpin mutation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8. Wolfram syndrome</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9. AR hyperekplexia</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10. Cockayne syndrome</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11. CADASIL</td>
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<td>12. Robinow syndrome</td>
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<td></td>
<td>13. LYK-5 mutation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>14. MECP2 mutation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>15. Malignant hyperpyrexia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selected references (principal references in bold): Chromosomal aberrations: 1. (Biraben et al., 2004; Inoue et al., 1997), 2. (Ohtsuka et al., 2005; Sugimoto et al., 1992), 3. (Battaglia et al., 1999); Inborn errors of metabolism: 1. (Bhatia et al., 2008; Zaatreh, 2005), 2. (Bahi-Buisson et al., 2006), 3. (Turk-Boru et al., 2003); Malformations of cortical development: 1. (Fauser et al., 2006); Others: 1. (Buoni et al., 2006), 2. (Beauvais et al., 2004), 3. (Kumada et al., 2006).

Benzodiazepine therapy (Koepp et al., 2005; Shinnar et al., 2001; Vinton et al., 2005).

Carbamazepine may cause paradoxical NCSE (Marini et al., 2005) while in toxic doses, may result in convulsive SE associated with wide complex tachycardia, antiepileptic drug resistance and mortality (Sharma et al., 1992). Valproic acid (VPA) has been hypothesized to cause SE in rare instances via induced hepatotoxicity and hyperammonemia, hyperammonemia alone, or via a paradoxical effect involving GABA or excitatory amino acids (Capocchi et al., 1998). Most of the reported cases were NCSE, within 2 weeks of starting VPA or within a week of dose increase (Capocchi et al., 1998; Shahar et al., 2002).

Antimicrobials

Cephalosporins are epileptogenic due to its structural similarity with bicuculline, thus exerting an inhibitory effect on GABA receptors (De Sarro et al., 1995). Usage of Cefepime, Ceftazidime and Ceftriaxone have all been complicated by NCSE (Martinez-Rodriguez et al., 2001; Ozturk et al., 2009). In contrast, GCSE was seen with intracerebro administered Cefazoline together with iohexol (Choi et al., 2008). Renal impairment was a prominent feature, either as an end-stage event or as an acute renal failure (Martinez-Rodriguez et al., 2001; Ozturk et al., 2009). This was thought to be due to increased blood brain barrier penetration as a result of reduced plasma protein levels and albumin-antibiotics binding affinity in uraemia, as well as competitive inhibition by organic acids on antibiotic active transport (Chatellier et al., 2002; Wallace, 1997).

Recovery was reported in most cases occurring 1–7 days following cessation of cephalosporin and concurrent antiepileptic therapy.

isoniazid toxicity is another frequently reported cause of SE (Caksen et al., 2003; Tajender and Saluja, 2006; Tibussek et al., 2006). It consists of a triad of coma, metabolic acidosis and refractory seizures preceded by nausea, vomiting, fever, rashes and ataxia. The mechanism of seizure production is due to isoniazid induced pyridoxine deficiency, and subsequent secondary reduction in GABA synthesis (Wood and Peesker, 1972).

Replacement of pyridoxine lead to termination of SE in all reported cases.

Chemotherapeutic drugs

Ifosfamide, a nitrogen mustard derivate, is a myelosuppressive agent from the group of alkylating compounds. Ifosfamide encephalopathy consists of ataxia, confusion, cerebellar signs, seizures, mutism, visual hallucinations and extrapyramidal features (Nicolao and Giometto, 2003). NCSE is a rare complication and presents with confusion, echolalia, mutism or myoclonus (Primavera et al., 2002; Wengs et al., 1993). The mechanism of action is thought to be derived from its active form, chloroacetaldehyde (CAA) being oxidised and conjugated to cysteine to form S-carboxymethylcysteine (SCMC), which has agonistic effects
Table 6  Drugs/toxins that cause or precipitate status epilepticus (see Supplementary Table 3 for additional references).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antiepileptic drugs</th>
<th>Antipsychotics</th>
<th>Chemotherapeutic drugs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tiagabine(^a)</td>
<td>Olanzapine</td>
<td>Ifosfamide(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbamazepine</td>
<td>Sertindole</td>
<td>Cisplatin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lamotrigine</td>
<td>Lamotrigine (Contrast media)</td>
<td>Tacrolimus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Levetiracetam</td>
<td>Iohexol</td>
<td>Cyclosporin A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valproic acid</td>
<td>Fluorescein</td>
<td>Methotrexate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vigabatrin</td>
<td>Iopamidol</td>
<td>Etoposide</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pregabalin</td>
<td>Diatrizoate</td>
<td>Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topiramate</td>
<td>1. Star fruit(^a)</td>
<td>Theophylline(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antimicrobials and antiviral drugs</td>
<td>Endosulfan</td>
<td>Lithium(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cephalosporins(^a)</td>
<td>Domoic acid(^a)</td>
<td>Morphin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isoniazid(^a)</td>
<td>4. Cocaine</td>
<td>Dramamine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quinolones</td>
<td>5. Tetramine(^a)</td>
<td>Flumazenil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Antihelmintic</td>
<td>7. Aluminium containing biomaterial</td>
<td>N-Acetylcysteine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amoxicillin</td>
<td>8. Carbon monoxide</td>
<td>4-Aminopyridine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clomipramine</td>
<td>9. Colloidal silver</td>
<td>Allopurinol</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fluoxetine</td>
<td>10. Ecstasy</td>
<td>Calcium carbonate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amitriptyline</td>
<td>11. Lead</td>
<td>Clonidine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citlalostram</td>
<td>12. Lysergic acid amide</td>
<td>Corticosteroids</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fluvoxamine</td>
<td>13. Maneb</td>
<td>Gelatine</td>
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<td>19. Thyroxine</td>
<td>15. Methylxetine</td>
<td>Interferon</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Sulfasalazine</td>
<td>17. Propofol</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. N-Acetylcysteine</td>
<td>23. Allopurinol</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. 4-Aminopyridine</td>
<td>25. Allopurinol</td>
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<tr>
<td>28. Sulfasalazine</td>
<td>29. Allopurinol</td>
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<td>30. Allopurinol</td>
<td>31. Allopurinol</td>
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<td>32. Allopurinol</td>
<td>33. Allopurinol</td>
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</table>

Selected references: Antiepileptic drugs: 1. (Koepp et al., 2005), 2. (Marini et al., 2005), Antimicrobials: 1. (Martinez-Rodriguez et al., 2001), 2. (Calzen et al., 2003); Antidepressants: 1. (Morazin et al., 2007); Contrast media: 1. (Tahta et al., 1993); Toxins: 1. (Neto et al., 2003), 2. (Grimmett et al., 1996), 3. (Teitelbaum et al., 1990); Chemotherapeutic drugs: 1. (Wengs et al., 1993); Others: 1. (Krieger and Takeyasu, 1999), 2. (Bellesi et al., 2006), 3. (Saltuari et al., 1992).\(^a\) Frequently reported causes of SE.

on the AMPA — kainite receptors (Nicolao and Giometto, 2003).

Response to therapy with standard AED therapy was favourable with full recovery.

Toxins

Domoic acid intoxication was first reported in 1987 in Canada following an outbreak of an encephalopathy consisting of headaches, hemiparesis, ophthalmoplegia, seizures and altered consciousness, associated with ingestion of contaminated blue mussels (Mytilus edulis) (Perl et al., 1990; Teitelbaum et al., 1990). Domoic acid is a structural analogue of kainic acid, a powerful glutamate receptor agonist (Quilliam and Wright, 1989) and overactivation leads to seizure induction as well as neuronal damage (Debonnel et al., 1989). Seizures, myoclonus and GCSE have been reported following acute intoxication, and complicated by chronic memory deficits and rarely temporal lobe epilepsy (Cendes et al., 1995; Teitelbaum et al., 1990).

Star fruit (Averrhoa carambola) a tropical fruit originating from South East Asia, causes neurotoxicity among patients with chronic renal insufficiency (Chang et al., 2000; Neto et al., 2003). Neto reported three levels of intoxication with status epilepticus presenting as the most severe form. In his series of 32 patients with star fruit toxicity, 7 developed seizures and all but 1 died, mostly due to SE (Neto et al., 2003). No exact mechanism has been identified, although extracts from star fruit have been shown in animal studies to inhibit GABA binding on synaptic membranes (Carolino et al., 2005).

There is no specific treatment for toxin induced SE. Cases of SE due to camphor poisoning have been reported to respond to anticonvulsant therapy (Emery and Corban, 1999). However, success or failure of treatment appears to be related to the dose of toxins ingested. Apart from a few case reports showing success using multiple anticonvulsants to control SE secondary to endosulfan, domoic acid or star fruit poisoning (Grimmett et al., 1996; Chang et al., 2000), treatment is largely confined to supportive care with a high morbidity and mortality rate.

Other causes

The final table (Table 7) presents reported iatrogenic causes of SE such as electroconvulsive therapy (Povlsen et al., 2003), neurosurgical complications (Burneo et al., 2005), uncommon complications of common medical conditions like...
Table 7  Other causes of SE (see Supplementary Table 4 for additional references).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Iatrogenic</th>
<th>Other medical conditions (cont.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Electroconvulsive therapy</td>
<td>7. Ulcerative colitis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Temporal lobectomy</td>
<td>8. Behcet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Insertion of intracranial electrode</td>
<td>9. Coeliac disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ventriculoperitoneal shunt</td>
<td>10. Cobalamin deficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Blood transfusion</td>
<td>11. Folic acid responsive seizures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Carotid angioplasty and stenting</td>
<td>12. Renal artery stenosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other medical conditions</strong></td>
<td>13. Pituitary apoplexy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Multiple Sclerosis</td>
<td>14. Renal artery dissection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hypertension induced PRES</td>
<td>15. Hypomelanosis if Ito</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Neuroleptic malignant syndrome</td>
<td>16. Cerebral palsy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Panayiotopoulus syndrome</td>
<td>17. Hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Thyroid disease</td>
<td>18. Anhidrotic ectodermal dysplasia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Pyridoxine dependent seizure</td>
<td>19. Methaemoglobinaemia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selected references: Iatrogenic: 1. (Povlsen et al., 2003), 2. (Burneo et al., 2005); Other medical conditions: 1. (Hess and Sethi, 1990), 2. (Al-Ansari and Todwal, 2007), 3. (Yoshino et al., 1998).

multiple sclerosis (Hess and Sethi, 1990) and hypertension (Al-Ansari and Todwal, 2007), in addition to a compilation of single case reports of rare causes of SE.

Conclusions

Knowledge of the range of conditions is obviously important to clinical practice and to diagnosis and investigation. Over 180 different aetiologies causing SE deemed uncommon were identified. Obviously, this sort of survey is open to reporting bias, and the list of causes cannot be claimed to be either complete or comprehensive. Nevertheless, it is difficult to see how else this topic could be approached, and interestingly most of the causes identified fell easily into 5 major aetiological groups (and a 6th miscellaneous category), suggesting that there may be common clinical attributes and pathophysiological mechanisms.

In treating status epilepticus it must be remembered that the associated mortality and morbidity is primarily due to the underlying disease or its complications rather than from a direct result of SE (Neligan and Shorvon, 2010) and aetiologies of SE associated with a particularly higher rate of mortality include Alpers disease, West Nile encephalitis, CJD and star fruit toxicity. An exception to this is the refractory nature of the SE in the POLG1 mutation associated syndromic epilepsy, where 9 of the 11 deaths were due to treatment resistant SE. Furthermore, SE often responds to therapy aimed at the underlying cause rather than symptomatic treatment of the seizures as is demonstrated by the success of immuno-suppressants in stopping SE in immunological disorders, the treatment of infections or the removal of toxic causes. Very often the success of a treatment strategy is dependent upon understanding the underlying aetiology.

The aetiologies identified in this review include conditions where SE is a frequent or predominant manifestation of the epileptic disorder (e.g. POLG1 mutations, ring chromosome 20, and domoic acid intoxication) and these conditions are of particular interest from the point of view of understanding the mechanisms of SE. Among the known or proposed pathophysiological mechanisms of SE due to the uncommon causes, 3 distinct groups stand out:

(1) Derangements of neurotransmitter function, in particular GABA<sub>A</sub> function – for instance, by agents such as tiagabine, valproic acid, vigabatrin, cephalosporins and endosulfan.

(2) An inflammatory process from autoimmune (e.g. paraneoplastic encephalitis, Hashimoto’s encephalopathy, Rasmussen’s encephalitis), infectious (e.g. CJD, CSD encephalopathy) and non-infectious entities (e.g. multiple sclerosis).

(3) Mitochondrial oxidative stress and mitochondrial DNA damage on epileptogenesis. Mitochondrial dysfunction may be the cause or consequence of epileptic seizures or SE (Cock, 2007; Patel, 2004).

It is our contention that by producing a preliminary and relevant list of the uncommon cause, it may encourage more awareness as well as reporting of similar conditions causing SE. An understanding of the cause is of obvious important in targeting investigation and improving prognosis. It may also lead to new insights into the mechanisms of the induction of status epilepticus and possibly also to better approaches to treatment.

Appendix A. Supplementary data


References


Uncommon causes of status epileptics

119


Uncommon causes of status epilepticus


