

Changes in Public Attitude Towards Epilepsy in Hungary Since 1994. A Multi-Criteria Weighting Analysis

Authors : Mengesha Srahbzu Biresaw, József Vitrai, Péter Halás, Vivian Correa, Anna Szúcs

Abstract : Objective: To assess the adult Hungarian population's knowledge about and attitude towards epilepsy and compare the present findings with previous ones in 1994 and 2000. Methods: We performed a cross-sectional survey of the Hungarian adult population from 28th February to 8th March 2023. A non-probability quota sampling with a random walk method was used. We applied the Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) method and used a multi-criteria weighting procedure to correct for bias along the main socio-demographic variables. To detect changes over time, we used chi-square tests, and to analyze the effect of sociodemographic characteristics, we applied multivariate logistic regression. Results: One thousand participants (53.1% women, mean age 48.1 ± 16.75 years) representing Hungary's population were interviewed, yielding a response rate of 80.3%. 26.3% knew someone with epilepsy (55.9% in 1994 and 51.9% in 2000), and 30.8% saw an epileptic seizure (58% in 1994 and 55.3% in 2000). Compared to the young, fewer adults and elderly people knew someone with epilepsy or had seen a seizure. Alike in 1994 and 2000, 16.6% reported objection to their children's interaction with people with epilepsy; however, in the present study, significantly fewer people opposed their children marrying or working together with epileptic people, indicating a change in attitude ($P < 0.0001$). Rural residents had less objection to their children's interaction with people with epilepsy ($P < 0.05$). People with secondary education objected significantly more often than those with primary education to their children's interaction ($P = 0.037$) or marriage to people with epilepsy ($P = 0.043$), or their having equal employment ($P = 0.008$). Higher education people were as 'permissive' as those with primary education. Significance: Certain parameters of familiarity and attitude-markers of the Hungarian population towards epilepsy have improved. These tendencies are promising, but work is still needed; our results will hopefully evoke educational programs and campaigns against negative attitudes.

Keywords : attitude, knowledge, stigma, epilepsy, Hungary

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