

Pediatric electroencephalography. Parent's knowledge and experience

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Electroencephalography (EEG) remains the single most important physiologic test of the cerebral cortex. It is a very important tool in investigating and managing children with epilepsy. However, the patient's cooperation is needed to minimize movement and muscle artifacts, which can interfere with EEG interpretation. When the clinical suspicion of epilepsy is high, and the awake recorded EEG is normal, sleep EEG may provide additional diagnostic information. The EEG procedure, like most in-hospital procedures, can be frightening for children and distressing for their parents.¹ The placement of EEG leads and the requirement of being still may result in further distress to an already frightened child. The EEG indication, most commonly seizure or epilepsy, is by itself stressful to these families and may affect the child's adaptation and interactions.² Therefore, it is not unusual for parents and children to be anxious prior to an EEG procedure. This feeling may be exaggerated if they received inadequate information or were misinformed and therefore interferes with their understanding, support, cooperation, and patience, all essential for a successful pediatric EEG procedure. To our knowledge, parent's perceptions and knowledge of the EEG procedure have received limited study. Significant deficits in nature and safety of EEG were found in one study and correlated with mothers' socioeconomic status and educational levels.³ Our objectives were to study parent's perceptions and knowledge of the EEG procedure before the study, and examine their impressions afterward. We hypothesized that many parents are not well informed of the EEG procedure and therefore most will find the experience better than they anticipated.