



Review

Epilepsy in paediatric patients with Parry-Romberg syndrome: A review of the literature

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ABSTRACT

Background: Parry–Romberg syndrome (PRS) is a rare disorder characterized by unilateral slow progressive facial atrophy that can be associated with neurologic manifestations, namely seizures. There is scarce data about seizures in paediatric patients with PRS. The aim of our work was to clarify the clinical features of paediatric patients with PRS and seizures.

Methods: We performed a literature review based on a literature search using PubMed and EMBASE databases. We included original articles in which the main diagnosis was PRS and the patients were 17 years old or less when the first seizure occurred.

Results: We included 40 patients. Most of the patients had previously normal development and had their first seizure in the first decade of life. Neurologic examination was abnormal in 56 % of patients. Seizures are typically focal, frequently with impaired awareness, and became refractory in about 40 % of patients. Few patients have generalized seizures. On electroencephalogram, epileptic discharges are generally focal, on the same side as the facial atrophy, without a predominant cerebral lobe localization. Brain MRI is almost always abnormal, typically with T2 subcortical hyperintensities, and sometimes brain atrophy or calcifications. In addition to the classic antiepileptic drugs, immunosuppressive drugs should be considered as potential epilepsy treatment.

Conclusion: To the best of our knowledge, this is the first review dedicated to the characteristics of paediatric patients with PRS and epilepsy. Seizures are usually focal, became refractory in 40 %, and have a significant impact on the quality of life and neurodevelopment of patients.

1. Introduction

Parry–Romberg syndrome (PRS) was first described by Parry in 1825 and later by Romberg in 1846 [1]. PRS is a rare disorder characterized by unilateral slow progressive facial atrophy that can affect all tissues, from the skin to the osteocartilaginous structures. It is sometimes

associated with a peculiar skin lesion called “en coup de sabre”– a subtype of localised scleroderma [2]. Overlap exists between these two entities, and in the literature there is still discussion as to whether they represent variants of the same disease with different manifestations (involving the skin in scleroderma “en coup de sabre” and subcutaneous tissue, muscle and bone in PRS).

The real incidence of PRS has not been ascertained so far and the aetiology is uncertain [3]. Autoimmunity, trauma, infection, vascular and autonomic dysregulation have all been suggested, but autoimmunity is the leading theory [3].

The first symptoms frequently start in the first two decades of life with progressive hemifacial atrophy of craniofacial tissues inferior to the forehead, typically involving dermatomes of one or more branches of the fifth cranial nerve [3].

PRS has been associated with various systemic manifestations, principally neurologic, ophthalmologic and maxillofacial [4]. Neurological manifestations can include seizures, headaches, movement disorders or neuropsychological symptoms. In a worldwide survey, about 11 % of PRS patients had coexistent epilepsy [5]. Knowledge about the seizure types and epilepsy of paediatric patients with PRS is limited. The aim of our work was to clarify the clinical features of paediatric patients with PRS and seizures.

2. Methods

We performed a literature review based on a literature search using

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Table 1
Summary of the characteristics of patients included in the review.

Author	Age	Age of onset	Sex	Affected side / frontal skin lesion	Seizures type	EEG discharges location	Neuro exam	Brain imaging (MRI)	Treatment	Seizures outcome
Sorgju [10]	5	2	M	Left / yes	Nonconvulsive status epilepticus Dyscognitive seizures	Spike and slow-wave complexes on left temporal region.	Normal	FLAIR hyperintensities in left mediotemporal areas	Globazam Methotrexate	Seizure free Hyperactivity
Zakkiriak [11]	14	14	M	Left / yes	Right focal-aware seizures	Epileptiform abnormalities in left fronto central area	Normal	Increased signal intensities in the left hemisphere, mainly in the frontal lobe, with areas of microhemorrhages and calcifications	Oxcarbazepine, prednisolone, methotrexate	Well controlled
Zakkiriak [11]	7	5	F	Left / Yes	Right focal-bilateralization	Spike activity over the left centro temporal area	Normal	Hemiatrophy of the left cerebral hemisphere with hyperintensity (FLAIR) in the left temporal lobe	VPA, oxcarbazepine, LEV, prednisolone, methotrexate	Well controlled
Anderson [12]	10	8	F	Left / yes	Focal?	Not described (temporal lobe epilepsy)		Left frontal and parietal intraparenchymal microbleeds	LEV, steroids and methotrexate (the later improved seizures)	2-year period with only one seizure
English [13]	12	11	M	Left / yes	Right focal-awareness-bilateralization	Epileptiform discharges in left cerebral hemisphere Moderately increased amplitude of the background activity	Sensory examination revealed decreased light touch over the right side	Patchy left supratentorial white matter T2 hyperintensity, as well as cystic changes in the left basal ganglia, microhemorrhages in white matter. Contrast-enhanced images: diffuse superficial and deep perivascular nodular enhancement in a distribution suggestive of diffuse venous inflammation. Arterial spin labeling perfusion: globally diminished flow within the left cerebral hemisphere. Gyrfiform calcifications	LEV, methotrexate and prednisolone	Recurrent seizures at the time of last evaluation
Yanagishita [14]	5	4	F	Right / yes	? ?	? ?		Cortical atrophy and calcifications in the right frontal lobe. T2 hyperintense areas in the white matter of the right frontal lobe. T2 hyperintense signals in left hemisphere	Methotrexate, multiple anti-epileptic drugs	Refractory Epilepsy
Somer [15]	11	5	F	Left/yes	Focal - impaired awareness	Normal	Pupil asymmetry	Nodular gray matter heterotopia adjacent to the frontal horns of both lateral ventricles		
Doolittle [16]	28	14	F	Right / yes	Generalized	Normal	Normal	Contralateral deep and subcortical white matter T2 hyperintensity		
Doolittle [16]	16	6	M	Left / no	Generalized	Right posterior focal slowing and epileptiform discharges lateralized to the right hemisphere	Nystagmus, visual impairment, Wide-based gait and trouble with tandem gait	Contralateral parietal cortical T2 hyperintensity Diffuse contralateral cerebral atrophy		
Garcíafo Gómez [17]	7	2	M	Left/ yes	Focal-impaired awareness			Ipsilateral parietal atrophy CT scan - calcification in the left brain hemisphere and a hypodense area in the head of the left caudate nucleus	CBZ, clobazam	Seizure controlled

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Table 1 (continued)

Author	Age	Age of onset	Sex	Affected cutaneous side / frontal skin lesion	Seizures type	EEG discharges location	Neuro exam	Brain imaging (MRI)	Treatment	Seizures outcome
Dupont [18]	24	4	F	Right / yes	Focal - impaired awareness	?	Normal	Gyration and white gray matter demarcation were abnormal in the anterior right frontal lobe and temporal lobe. In same area there were white matter T2 hyperintensities and heterogeneous cyst-like zones in the right basal ganglia area		Refractory epilepsy
Madruqa [19]	11	3	F	Left / no	Focal?	Epileptiform discharges in right cerebral hemisphere	Normal	Normal	CBZ	Seizures controlled with medication
Kakisaka [20]	26	16	M	Left/yes	Generalized Left Focal clonic EPC		Left hemiparesis. Babinski sign at left	Right hemispheric atrophy, most prominent in peri-rolandic and insular regions	VPA, zonisamide, immunoglobulin	Refractory epilepsy
Longo [21]	6	6	M	Left / no	Left focal - aware	Repetitive slow waves over the left frontotemporal and parietal areas, sometimes intermingled with spikes and waves more evident during sleep	Normal	Mild extended T1 and T2 signal changes in the white matter of the left frontal region. Increased atrophy of the left hemisphere, particularly the frontotemporal region	Several antiepileptic drugs Steroids Immunoglobulin and phenobarbital reduced seizures frequency	Refractory epilepsy, Learning difficulties
Seifert [22]	23	14	M	Left, no	Focal - impaired awareness			Left frontal lesion (hyperintensity FLAIR)	Many antiepileptic drugs (type?) prednisolone Immunoglobulin (best) CBZ, oxcarbazepine	Refractory epilepsy
Kaciński [23]	11	10	M	Left, no	Focal - impaired awareness	Sharp waves and single sharp and slow wave complexes in right posterior region	Intermittent right VI nerve palsy	Normal		Good control of seizures
Moseley [9]	23	5?	M	Left / yes	Left focal - aware	Discharges in right parietal occipital region		Right cerebral/cerebellar and left occipital atrophy. T2 hyperintensities within the right cerebral white matter	Several antiepileptic drugs Rituximab improved seizures	Epilepsy improved after rituximab
Qureshi [24]	10	10	M	Left / no	Right focal - impaired awareness	Epileptiform activity in centrotemporal areas	Right hemiparesis	Atrophy of the left hemisphere, hypoplastic left internal carotid artery. Left cerebral arteries were hypoplastic.		
Satori [25]	9	6	M	Left / yes	Left focal - impaired awareness Status epilepticus		Normal	Cortical and subcortical areas of hyperintense signal on T2 weighted and FLAIR sequences in the paramedian and basal regions of left frontal lobe and left temporal lobe	Globazam, oxcarbazepine Prednisolone and methotrexate	Good seizure control. Learning disabilities improved with prednisolone and methotrexate.
Verhelst [26]	8	2	F	Right / yes	Focal - aware	Right temporal focus with sharp slow-waves	Normal	Hippocampal atrophy on the right temporal lobe	Several antiepileptic drugs VPA, nitrazepam and topiramate (best combination -seizure free)	Seizure free with 3 antiepileptics, after a period several seizures, cognitive decline
Carreño [27]	9	3	F	Left / no	Right focal. EPC.	Continuous slowing and multiregional sharp waves over the left hemisphere. One hundred seizures recorded arising from the left frontal region	Hemiparesis	Atrophy of the left hemisphere	Surgery (Functional hemispherectomy)	Seizures decreased dramatically after surgery

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Table 1 (continued)

Author	Age	Age of onset	Sex	Affected cutaneous side / frontal skin lesion	Seizures type	EEG discharges location	Neuro exam	Brain imaging (MRI)	Treatment	Seizures outcome
Halдар [28]	17	16	F	Right / yes	Left focal and generalized	Normal	Left hemiparesis	Focal atrophy in right frontoparietal cortex	Prednisolone improved seizures	Seizures stopped with steroids, only 1 seizure thereafter
Sommer [29]	14	3	F	Right/ no	Focal	Overlying beta activity	Normal	Frontoparietal subcortical hyperintense lesion in FLAIR and T1		
Sommer [29]	14	7	F	Left / yes	Generalized tonic-clonic	Normal	Normal	Normal		
Sommer [29]	26	6	F	Bilateral/ yes	Generalized tonic-clonic	Frontotemporal theta-delta activity	Palsy of cranial nerves 3,4,6,7	Frontoparietal subcortical hyperintense lesion in FLAIR and T1		
Sommer [29]	26	4	M	Left/ yes	Generalized tonic-clonic	Normal	Fixed pupil	Ventricular dilatation, subcortical calcification		
Paprocka [30]	10	6	F	Left / yes	Right Focal	General paroxysmal changes with variable hemisphere predominance.	Right hemiparesis	Hyperintense lesion in left pericentral lobulus	Surgery (Cortical resection and multiple subpial resections)	Refractory epilepsy even after surgery, Cognitive decline
Sathornsumeteer [31]	4	2	M	Right / yes	Left focal	Right temporal slowing and occasional spikes	Right facial palsy, right oculomotor palsy	Minimal cerebral atrophy on the right, asymmetry of hippocampal structures, and a right frontal lobe lesion	Methotrexate and prednisolone, later immunoglobulin and cyclophosphamide	Refractory epilepsy, Died
Chbicheb [32]	17	5	M	Right / yes	Left focal – impaired awareness	Slow right occipital activity		Right occipital atrophy and dilation of the occipital horn of lateral ventricle. Right occipital calcifications.	Several antiepileptic drugs Surgery (1 st - right occipital lobectomy and partial right parietal resection; 2 nd right parietal resection and anterior disconnection)	Refractory epilepsy, cognitive decline
Chbicheb [32]	5	5	F	Right / yes	Focal - impaired awareness	Spike-wave and theta activity in right temporoparietal region		Moderate ventricular dilation	Phenobarbital Vigabatrin Topiramate Steroids	Refractory epilepsy, Learning difficulties
Sandhu [33]	4	3	M	Left / no	Focal - impaired awareness	?	Normal	Subdural hygroma	phenytoin	
Shah [34]	7	7	M	Right / yes	Left focal. EPC Generalized.	Intermittent, low to medium voltage, polymorphic slow wave activity of the right hemisphere. Rare sharp wave activity emanating from the right frontal region	Left hemiparesis and deep tendon reflexes brisker on the left. fine motor movements moderately impaired in the left hand.	Atrophy of right frontal and parietal lobe. T2 and FLAIR in the right frontal cortex with minimal white matter involvement	VPA, CBZ, clonazepam, oxcarbazepine Surgery (Right Hemispherectomy)	Seizure free after surgery
Castañeda-Reyna [35]	20	10	M	Left / no	Focal – impaired awareness		Normal	Extensive cystic change in deep white matter of left temporo-occipital region	CBZ, VPA, gabapentin	Died in status epilepticus
Yano [36]	3	3	M	Left/ yes	Right focal - impaired awareness	Slow-wave bursts lasting 1–2 s predominantly over the left frontocentral area during both waking state and sleep		Focal areas of T1 and T2 prolongation in the frontal white matter adjacent to the left lingulate semiovale. Discrete linear calcifications	VPA, CBZ	Seizures controlled
Goldberg-stern [37]	7		F	Left / no	Focal – impaired awareness	Mild left slowing with no epileptiform discharges	Brisk deep tendon reflexes on the left. Disk edema and anterior uveitis	Left frontal T2 hyperintensities, left frontal region. Linear contrast-enhancing lesion in the left frontal lobe	CBZ prednisone and methotrexate	No seizures on CBZ
Taylor [38]	14	2	F	Right / yes	Focal -impaired awareness	Few bursts of high amplitude delta waves predominately on the left		Calcifications of temporal lobe.	Lamotrigine carbamazepine	Seizures controlled

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Table 1 (continued)

Author	Age	Age of onset	Sex	Affected cutaneous side / frontal skin lesion	Seizures type	EEG discharges location	Neuro exam	Brain imaging (MRI)	Treatment	Seizures outcome
Takahashi [39]	30	15	M	Right / no	Focal	Spike discharges predominantly in the right occipital lobe	Left upper temporal homonymous hemianopsia	Multiple cerebral calcifications		
Dereix [40]	15	9	F	Left / no	Focal - impaired awareness	Spike and wave complexes in left hemisphere	Hemiparesis	Porencephaly on left hemisphere, left parietal and frontal calcifications	Vigabatrin, CBZ	Seizures controlled. mild cognitive impairment
Miller [41]	21	9	F	Right / yes	Focal	?	Partial III nerve palsy	Normal	Phenobarbital	Only 2 seizure not medicated
Klene [42]	< 18	< 18	F		Focal			Hemiatrophy of brain		

VPA- valproic acid; LEV -levetiracetam; CBZ- carbamazepine; EPC – epilepsy partialis continua; ? – not specified in original article.

PubMed and EMBASE databases. The main goal of this review was to summarize the clinical findings, diagnosis, clinical course and proposed treatments of paediatric cases of Parry-Romberg and epilepsy.

The search terms were “Parry-Romberg syndrome”, “progressive hemifacial atrophy”, “progressive facial atrophy”, “epilepsy” and “seizure”. An example of a MEDLINE

research query was: (Parry-Romberg syndrome OR progressive hemifacial atrophy OR progressive facial atrophy AND (epilepsy OR seizure)).

We included original articles of retrospective cohort studies, case series and case reports in the English language literature or available translations of international literature. The search has been limited to articles published in last 30 years (from 1st of January 1989 to 1st of December 2019). A cross-check of the references from the original studies was performed in order to identify potential additional papers. The eligibility criteria for inclusion required that the original article refer to PRS as the main diagnosis of the patient, and that the patient was 17 years old or younger when first seizure occurred. Additional neurologic symptoms or diseases (e.g. Rasmussen encephalitis) were not criteria for exclusion. We excluded cases of patients in which the main diagnosis defined by the authors were linear scleroderma or Dyke-Davidoff-Masson Syndrome. Cases of PRS without seizures were excluded. Original articles with poor information regarding epilepsy in PRS were also excluded.

After completion of the searches and excluding the duplicate studies, the initial screening of publications included reviewing titles and abstracts. For documents fitting the inclusion criteria, we collected the following information: first author, publication year, age of PRS diagnosis, age of onset of seizures, seizures types and seizures descriptions, electroencephalogram reports, imaging data and outcome. Descriptive statistic was used to summarise the study results.

3. Results

We identified 167 articles with the key search terms and 34 of them met the inclusion criteria. Articles not selected were excluded because important information was missing, the main diagnosis was other than PRS (e.g. linear scleroderma), the patient had a clinical presentation that strongly overlapped with other diseases and age of onset of seizures was greater than 17 years of age.

Most of the papers were case reports and cases series. The maximum number of patients in an article were four. We included 40 patients. Twenty patients (50 %) were female and 20 patients were male. Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of patients included.

Most patients had previously normal development and had their first seizure in the first decade of life. Neurologic examination was abnormal in 56 % (17/30) of patients. Neurologic abnormalities were different in different patients, but the most common reported abnormality was hemiparesis.

Seizures were typically focal in the 85 % (34 /40) of patients and commonly associated with impaired awareness. Some patients experienced evolution to bilateral convulsive seizures and there were 8 patients (22 %) who also or exclusively had primary generalised seizures. The duration of seizure was missing in most articles and no conclusion could be made with regards to this. The seizures tended to increase in frequency with time and became refractory in a significant number of patients. There was data about seizure outcome in 29 patients, and in 11 (38 %) seizures were refractory. Some patients developed epilepsy partialis continua. Table 2 show some descriptions of focal seizures in PRS patients. Electroencephalographic findings included, at least in the early stages of the disease, a normal background rhythm. Epileptic discharges were generally focal, on the same side as the facial atrophy. Epileptiform discharges did not preferentially affect a specific cerebral lobe, and in a significant number of patients discharges involved all of the hemisphere.

Brain imaging (MRI) was abnormal in 36 patients (90 %), only 4 patients had a normal brain MRI. Common abnormalities were T2 hyperintensities, which could be diffuse or localized, and when localized

Table 2
Seizure semiology of some patients.

Author	Seizure semiology
English [13]	“a crawling sensation over his right foot that rose through his body and subsequent generalized tonic-clonic seizure” “episodes of right-sided numbness and weakness without secondary generalization”
Dupont [18]	“rich set of subjective symptoms, consisting of various vegetative and psychic sensations such such as thoracic pressure, a feeling of warmth, micropsia or macropsia, and gustative or olfactory hallucinations, sometimes followed by complex partial seizures with pale- ness and swallowing.”
Moseley [9]	“slowness to respond, eye fluttering with speech arrest and rare left leg twitching”
Verhelst [26]	“a sensation of pain in the left corner of the mouth and the left arm, rapidly followed on most occasions by twitching of the left corner of the mouth and the left arm.”
Derex [40]	“rupture of the contact, chewing and complex automatisms, lasting one minute.”

were more frequent in the frontal region. Hemispheric atrophy and calcifications were also reported as frequent related features.

Little information regarding prognosis was available, but, as already mentioned, seizures became refractory over time in 38 % of patients. These patients had tried various antiepileptic drugs with limited success.

Immunosuppressive drugs used in the treatment of dermatologic condition may also have some impact in seizures control. In at least four patients there was a temporal relation between seizure control and initiation of immunosuppressive drugs.

Surgery in PRS for refractory epilepsy was an option for five patients. Two patients had a significant benefit with regards to seizures. Hemispherectomy was the only surgery type associated with seizure improvement. Less extensive procedures were not associated with a better outcome.

Cognitive decline and learning disabilities were reported and associated with refractory epilepsy. Two patients died, one in status epilepticus.

4. Discussion

Debate continues as to whether PRS and linear scleroderma / morphea en coup de sabre are different processes or are part of a single disease spectrum. Currently, there is a tendency to consider them variants of localized scleroderma [6]. In linear scleroderma /morphea en coup de sabre there is normally a cutaneous lesion and skin induration, predominantly affecting the forehead, and sometimes associated with hyperpigmentation and alopecia. Histopathologic features include dermal sclerosis. In PRS there is paramedian atrophy of the face, and the atrophy may extend to the entire hemiface with no overlying skin induration. Histopathological features include atrophy of subcutaneous, fat, muscle and osteocartilaginous tissues [6]. These differences are difficult to separate clinically and overlap occurs in an important percentage of cases. While at present there is no definite answer to this question, we preferred to separate these two entities, whenever it was possible, in order to select a homogeneous sample (and avoid mixing different variants or diseases). For this reason, and because they probably represent a more severe phenotype, we decided to include only patients with the diagnosis of PRS.

Neurologic involvement is frequent among PRS patients. Of the various neurological manifestations seizures are one of most frequent reported in literature [5].

Despite this fact, little has been written in the medical literature about the subject, especially concerning paediatric patients. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first review dedicated to discussing the characteristics of paediatric patients with PRS with epilepsy.

Seizures in PRS can be explained by intracerebral lesions that usually accompany facial involvement of the disease, even in cases where that lesion is not identifiable on MRI. In our review brain MRI frequently revealed abnormalities, often involving the hemisphere ipsilateral to the skin lesions. These lesions appeared as T2 hyperintensities, mostly in the subcortical white matter, but also as brain atrophy or calcifications. These findings were in accordance with the extensive review of Chiu et al. concerning brain imaging in PRS [7].

In a review of neurologic manifestations of PRS, which included

adult patients, epilepsy was reported to occur in 60.5 % of patients [8]. Seizures were focal in 50 % of patients and generalized in 43.6 % of the patients [8]. It was estimated that in about a third of patients these seizures are refractory to medication. In our review more than 85 % of paediatric patients had focal seizures. Usually the affected cutaneous site is contralateral to seizure semiology, and ipsilateral with neuroimaging and electroencephalogram findings. Some patients presented with a clinical picture of cerebral unihemispheric atrophy and intractable focal seizures suggestive of Rasmussen encephalitis [9].

Electroencephalogram is reported to be abnormal in most patients with seizures and discharges were mainly localized in frontal or temporal regions [8]. In this review we didn't see preferential involvement of particular cerebral lobes. Some patients have discharges mainly in posterior regions. It is reported that about 10 % of the patients have an abnormal EEG without a past or present history of seizures [8], but in this review we only included patients with seizures.

Immunosuppressive drugs used in the treatment of associated dermatologic conditions may have some impact on seizure control in some patients, and should probably be considered as an alternative to classic antiepileptic drugs.

Although only 5 surgical cases were reported here, patients who underwent hemispherectomy had better seizure control than patients with less extensive procedures. This finding agrees with the concept that lesions visible on brain MRI may be only part of the total area of abnormality.

Given the publication bias and retrospective nature of reports, we are cautious about the conclusions of this review. Deriving epidemiological data from retrospective cases series and reports is difficult and has some associated flaws. There may be a tendency to preferentially publish ‘interesting’ cases, especially single cases, and this may not be representative of the majority of patients. Most of the articles were not dedicated to neurological symptoms or epilepsy, so information regarding seizure characterization is often limited. However, the fact that most reports were not dedicated to epilepsy may represent a potential strength. Most cases concerned PRS in general (rather than epilepsy in PRS) and as a result the data concerning epilepsy is potentially less likely to suffer from publication bias.

Despite the limitations, this review allowed us to better characterise epilepsy in paediatric patients with PRS, and to gather some preliminary data about outcome. Prospective data collection is urgently needed.

Seizures represent an important component of the burden of the disease and significantly affect both quality of life and neurodevelopment. Neurologic sequelae included motor deficits (such as hemiparesis) and cognitive deficits (ranging from mild learning disabilities to important intellectual disability).

5. Conclusion

Paediatric patients with PRS usually develop seizures in the first decade of life. Seizures are predominantly focal with impaired awareness, and tend to become refractory in about 40 % of cases. Seizures seem to affect the quality of life and neurodevelopment of these children. Treatment of seizures include classic antiepileptic drugs, but immunosuppressive drugs and surgery should also be considered.

Declaration of Competing Interest

None.

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