

# The Impact of Epilepsy on Women: A Community-Based Survey

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## Background

The differential impact of epilepsy on women is complex and there have been no large community-based surveys addressing this issue.

## Survey methodology

A survey was mailed to persons with epilepsy (PWE) and persons with no chronic ailments (NoProb) identified from a prior disease screening survey of 180,997 individuals from the NFO Worldgroup household panel. A total of n=2500 surveys were mailed in January of 2002 with n=1116 returned (response rate = 45%).

Post-weighting was used to balance sample characteristics and demographics to the 2000 US Census for:

- Age, gender, region, urban vs. rural, household size, household income and census region

Chi-square analysis was used to test differences between discrete variables and ANOVA was used to test mean differences.

### Survey Contents:

- Demographics: Age, Gender, Race, Income, Census Region, Urban vs. Rural, Household Size
- Medical history
- Epilepsy history
- Quality of Life in Epilepsy 89 (QOLIE-89)
- Seizure Severity Questionnaire (SSQ)
- Centers for Epidemiological Studies-Depression (CESD) questionnaire

## Demographics

	PWE	No Prob
Number of Surveys Completed	775	341
Gender Distribution		
Men	53%	52%
Women	47%	48%

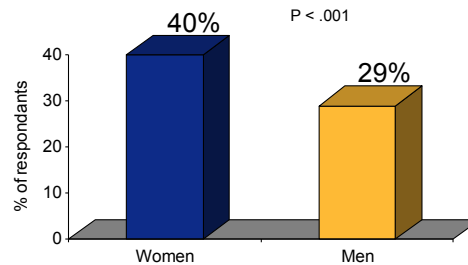
## Epilepsy History

	Men	Women
Epilepsy Etiology		
Head Injury	20%	27%
p<.05		
Active seizures (<2yrs)	68%	65%
NS		
% Very Severe Seizures	22%	22%
NS		
% Very Bothering Seizures	18%	22%
NS		

## Results

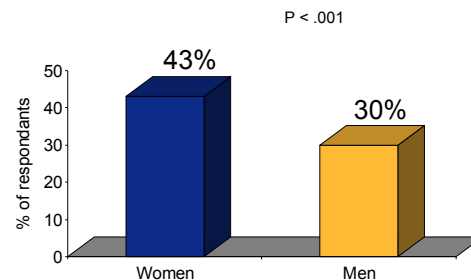
### Figure 1. Self Reported Depression History

Women with Epilepsy reported depression symptoms and/or recent (past 12 month) discussions with a physician regarding depression, more often than men.



### Figure 2. Past-week CES-D Major/Moderate Depression

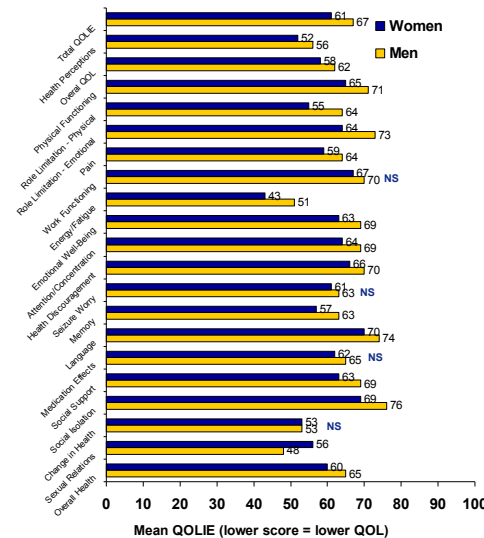
A greater percentage of Women with Epilepsy were experiencing current depression on CES-D.



## Quality of Life

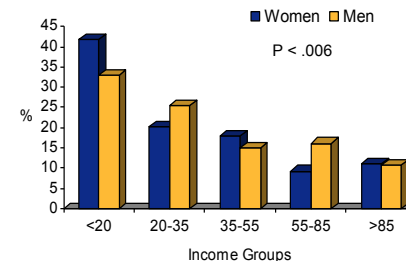
### Figure 3. QOLIE-89

Women report significantly lower (p<.05, unless noted NS) quality of life compared to men on total quality of life and all QOLIE subscales except work functioning, seizure worry, medication effects and change in health. Men have significantly lower quality of life on the sexual relations subscale.



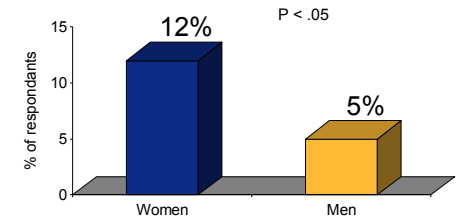
### Figure 4. Household Income

Women with Epilepsy were more likely than men to have annual household income less than \$20,000.



### Figure 5. Health Insurance

Women with Epilepsy were more likely than men to not have health insurance.



## Summary

- Represents largest community-based survey of women with epilepsy
- Women with epilepsy showed similar levels of seizure control to men, but women with epilepsy report:
  - More depression
  - Lower quality of life
  - Lower Incomes
  - More often that they have no health insurance
- This study suggests that socioeconomic status may be worse for women with epilepsy compared with their male counterparts.

## References

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