

Abstract

Psychogenic nonepileptic seizures (PNES) are abrupt paroxysmal changes in behaviour, sensation, or experience that mimic epilepsy, but that are not accompanied by the electrophysiological changes typical for epilepsy. Their cause is psychological. An examination of neuropsychological correlates of PNES is therefore crucial for understanding, effective diagnosis and treatment of this disorder. The aim of our study is to explore a specific neuropsychological profile of patients with PNES, particularly cognitive impairment, early parental bonding and occurrence of selected life events during childhood and before the onset of PNES. We examined 38 patients with PNES and 38 healthy controls matched for age and sex using neuropsychological battery RBANS, PBI questionnaire and a checklist of life events. The results showed that overall cognitive performance of patients with PNES was significantly worse in comparison with healthy controls. However, there was no significant difference between the two groups in immediate memory and language domains. Furthermore, patients with PNES recollected significantly more paternal control in childhood, more stressful situations, more opportunities for social learning of the sick role, more health problems in childhood and also significantly more troubles preceding the onset of PNES. Presented results can be utilised for optimization of the diagnostic and treatment process.

Keywords: psychogenic nonepileptic seizures, cognitive impairment, parental bonding, life events