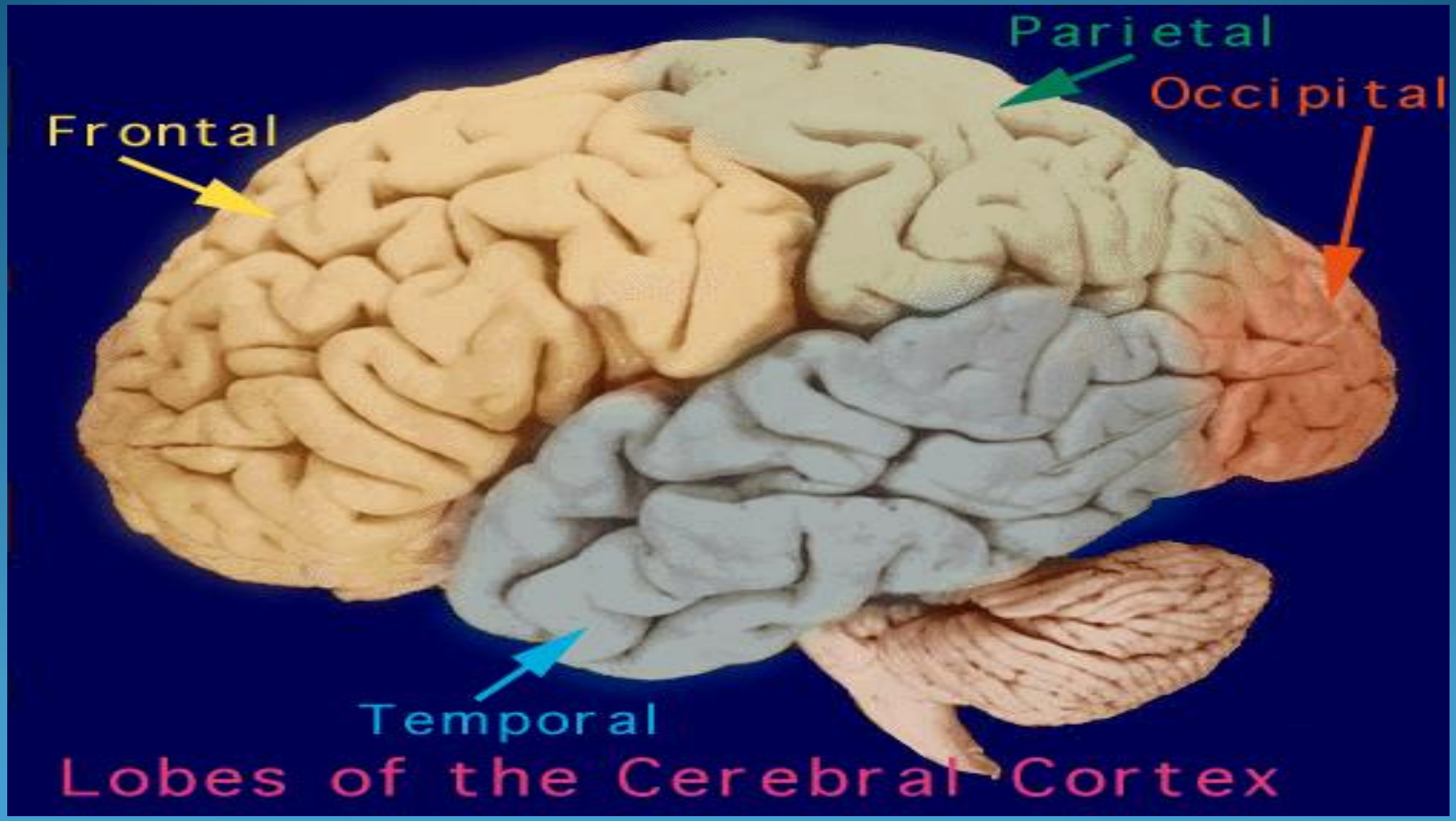
Antiepileptic drugs

Prof. Yieldez Bassiouni



Objectives

At the end of the lectures, students should

1- Describe types of epilepsy

2- List the antiepileptic drugs (**1st & 2nd generation)**

3- Describe briefly the mechanism of action of antiepileptic drugs.

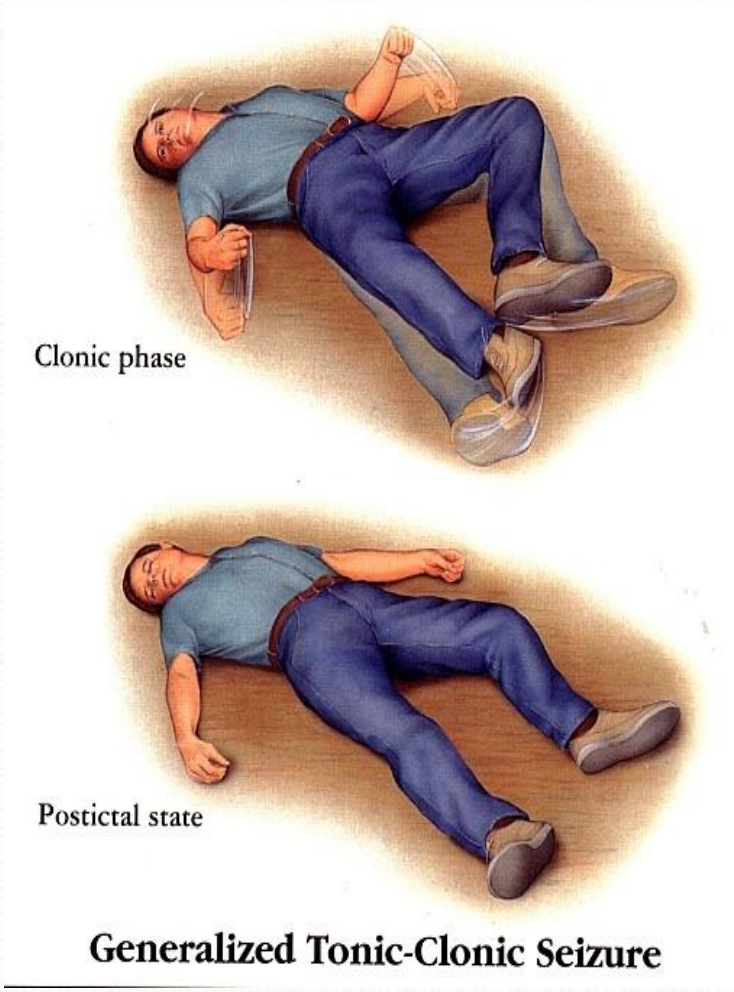
4- Enumerate the clinical uses of each drug

5- Describe the adverse effects of each antiepileptic drug

6- Describe treatment of status epilepticus

Definition

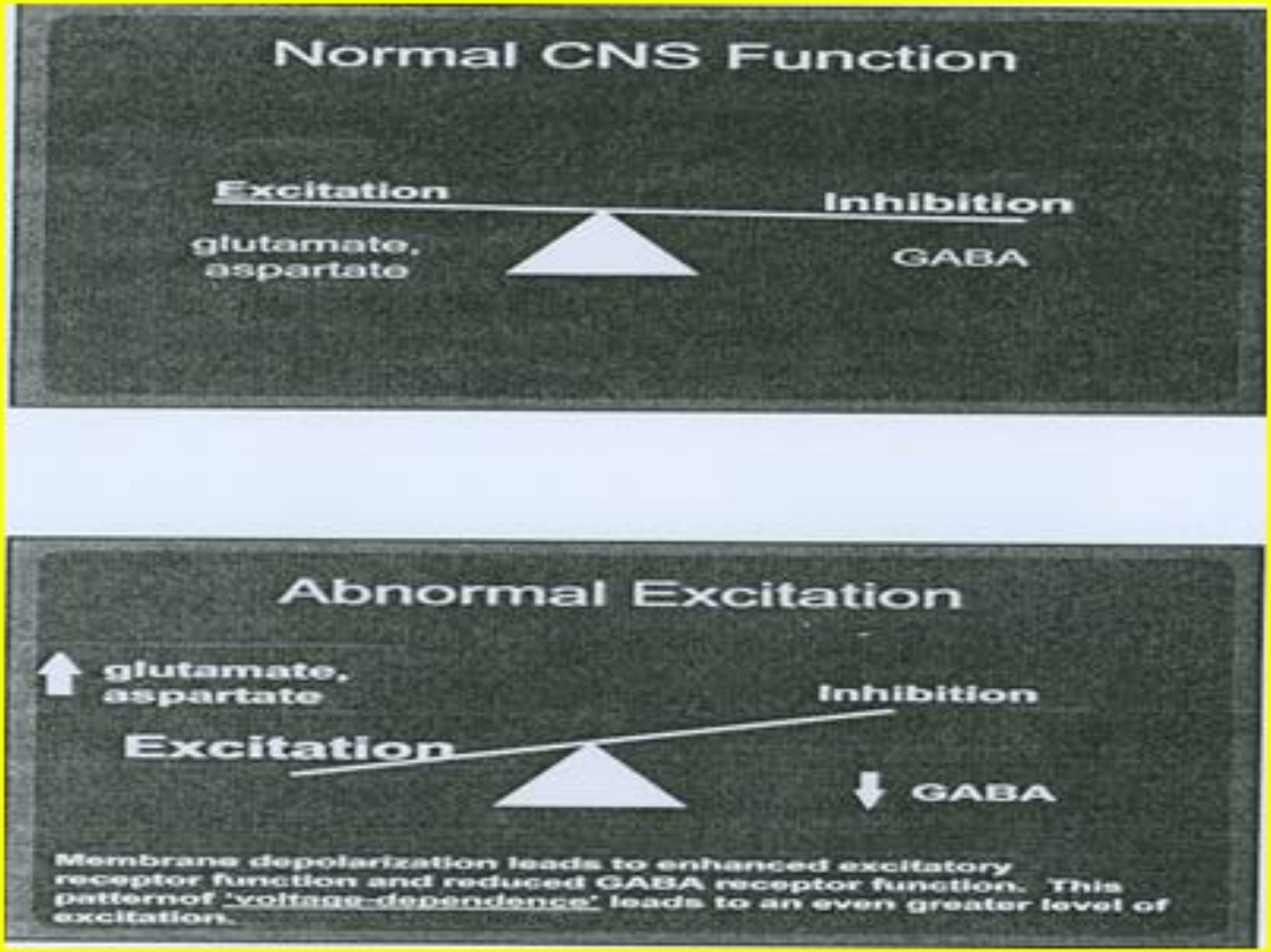
- ***Epilepsy is a chronic medical condition characterized by 2 or more unprovoked seizures (within 6-12 months).***
- ***It is not a disease, it is a syndrome (what is the difference ?)***
- ***What is the difference between seizure & epileptic syndrome?***



Generalized Tonic-Clonic Seizure

- **A syndrome** متلازمة is a set of medical signs and symptoms that occur together and suggest the presence of a certain disease or an increased chance of developing the disease. **A disease** is the actual diagnosed impairment of health or a condition of abnormal functioning.

- **Seizures** نوبات are abnormal movements or behavior due to unusual electrical activity in the brain, are a symptom of epilepsy. But not all people who appear to have seizures have **Epilepsy**, صرع a group of related disorders characterized by a tendency for **recurrent** seizures


Normal CNS Function
Excitation
Inhibition
glutamate,
aspartate
GABA
Abnormal Excitation
glutamate,
aspartate
Inhibition
Excitation
GABA
Membrane depolarization leads to enhanced excitatory receptor function and reduced GABA receptor function. This patternof 'voltage-dependence' leads to an even greater level of excitation.

Etiology of seizures

- Congenital defects, head injuries, trauma, hypoxia
- Infection (bacteria or virus) e.g. meningitis, brain abscess, viral encephalitis.
- Concussion, depressed skull, fractures.
- Brain tumors (including tuberculoma), vascular occlusion, stroke.
- Drug withdrawal, e.g. CNS depressants, alcohol or drug abuse or drug overdose,e.g. penicillin.
- A poison, like lead
- Fever in children (febrile convulsion).
- Hypoglycemia
- PKU(phenylalanine 

tyrosine)
- Photo epilepsy

Triggers

- **Fatigue**
- **Stress**
- **Sleep deprivation**
- **Poor nutrition**
- **Alcohol**

Classification of Epilepsy

a)Partial (focal) ***Arise in one cerebral hemisphere***	
[1] Simple	***consciousness is retained***
[2] Complex (psychomotor)	***Altered consciousness***

b)Secondarily generalized

Begins as partial (simple or complex) and progress into tonic- clonic (grand mal) seizure.

c)Primary Generalized

Both hemispheres + loss of consciousness.

Tonic-clonic (Grand mal)	*Stiffness (15-30 sec) followed by violent contractions & relaxation (1-2 minute)*
Tonic	*Muscle stiffness*
Clonic	*Spasms of contraction & relaxation*
Atonic (loss of tone)	*Pt's legs give under him & drop down*
Myoclonic	*Jerking movement of the body*
Absence (Petit mal)	*Brief loss of consciousness with minor muscle twitches eye blinking*
Status epilepticus	Re-occuring seizure

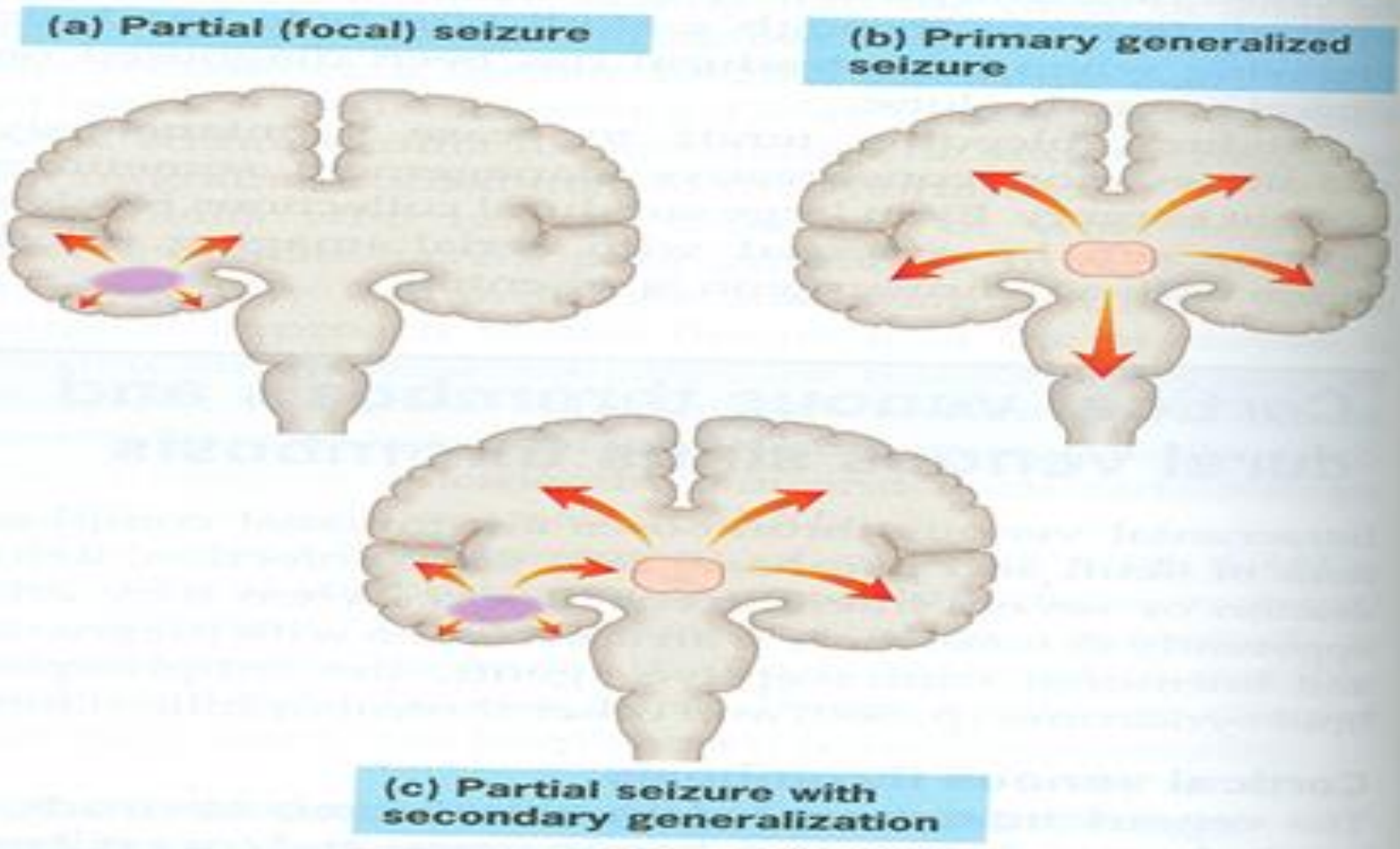


Fig. 20.23 **Seizure types.** **(a)** Partial (focal) seizure. **(b)** Primary generalized seizure. **(c)** Partial seizure with secondary generalization.

General rules for treatment of epilepsy

- Epilepsy is usually controlled but **not cured** with medication.
- Upto 80% of pts can expect **partial or complete** control of seizures with appropriate treatment.
- Antiepileptic drugs are indicated when there is two or more seizures occurred in short interval (6 m -1y)
- An initial therapeutic aim is to use only one drug (**monotherapy**).

- Drugs are usually administered **orally**
- **Monitoring plasma** drug level is useful
- **Triggering factors** can affect seizure control by drugs.
- **Sudden withdrawal of drugs should be avoided**

Withdrawal considered

- Seizure–free period of 2-5 yrs or longer
- Normal IQ
- Normal EEG prior to withdrawal
- NO juvenile myoclonic epilepsy (lifelong treatment)

Relapse rate when antiepileptics are withdrawn is 20-40%.

Mechanism of Anti-Epileptic Drugs

Anti –epileptic drugs inhibit depolarization of neurons by following mechanisms:

- **Inhibition of excitatory neurotransmission**
  (Glutamate)
- **Enhancement of inhibitory neurotransmission**
  (GABA)
- **Blockade of voltage-gated positive current**
  (Na^{+})
  (Ca^{2+})
- **Increase outward positive current**
  (K^{+})

Classification of antiepileptic drugs

First-generation

- **Phenytoin**
- **Carbamazepine**
- **Valproate**
- **Ethosuximide**
- *Phenobarbital and Primidone*
- *Benzodiazepines (e.g. Clonazepam, **lorazepam** and diazepam)*

Second- generation

- **Lamotrigine****
- **Topiramate ****
- Levetiracetam
- Gabapentin
- Vigabatrin
- Felbamate
- Zonisamide

Phenytoin

Pharmacokinetics:

- **Given orally, well absorbed from GIT.**
- **Also available i.v. and i.m.(fosphenytoin)**
- **Enzyme inducer**
- **Metabolized by the liver to inactive metabolites**
- **Half life approx. 20 hr**
- **Excreted in urine**

Fosphenytoin

- **Parenteral form of phenytoin**
- A Prodrug
- Given i.v. or i.m. and rapidly converted to phenytoin in the body
- Avoids **local complications** associated with phenytoin

Phenytoin

Mechanism of action

- Blockade of Na^+ & Ca + + influx into neuronal axon.
- Inhibit the release of excitatory transmitters
- Potentiate the action of GABA

Therapeutic uses:

- Partial and generalized tonic-clonic seizures **Not** in **absence seizure**.
- **In status epilepticus, IV**

Side effects

- Nausea or vomiting
- Neurological like headache, vertigo, ataxia, diplopia , nystagmus
- Sedation
- Gum hyperplasia
- Hirsutism
- Acne
- Folic acid deficiency (megaloblastic anemia)
- Vit D deficiency (osteomalcia)
- Teratogenic effects

Phenytoin- induced gum hyperplasia

Carbamazepine

- **Pharmacokinetics:**
  - **Available only orally**
  - **Well absorbed**
  - **Strong enzyme inducer including its own metabolism**
  - **Metabolized by the liver to active & inactive metabolites**
  - **Half life 18-35 hr**
  - **Excreted in urine**

Carbamazepine

Mechanism of action

- Blockade of Na^+ & Ca + + influx into neuronal axon.
- Inhibit the release of excitatory transmitters
- Potentiate the action of GABA

Therapeutic uses:

- **Drug of choice in partial seizures.**
- Tonic-clonic seizures (1ry & 2ry generalized) but **Not** in absence seizures.

Side effects

- GIT upset
- Hypersensitivity reactions
- Drowziness , ataxia, headache & diplopia
- Water intoxication & Hyponatremia
- Teratogenicity

Sodium Valproate

- **Broad spectrum antiepileptic**
- **Pharmacokinetics :**
  - **Available as capsules, Syrup, I.V.**
  - **Metabolized by the liver (inactive)**
  - **Enzyme inhibitor**
  - **Half life 12-16 hr**
  - **Excreted in urine**

Sodium valproate

Mechanism of action

- Blocks activated Na^+ channels.
- **Enhances GABA synthesis & reduces degradation**
- Suppress glutamate action.
- **Blocks T-type Ca^{2+} channels**

[II] Other uses:

- **Bipolar disorder and mania**
- **Prophylaxis of migraine**
- **Lennox-Gastaut syndrome**

Therapeutic Uses

[I] Epilepsy:

It is effective for all forms of epilepsy

- Generalized tonic-clonic seizures (1^{ry} or 2^{ry}).
- **Absence seizures**
- Complex partial seizures
- Myoclonic
- Atonic
- Photosensitive epilepsy

➢ **Not in status epilepticus**

Side effects:

- Weight gain (↑appetite).
- Transient hair loss, with re-growth of curly hair
- Thrombocytopenia
- Hepatotoxicity
- Teratogenicity

Ethosuximide

- **Mechanism of action**

Inhibits T- type Ca^{2+} channels in thalamo-cortical neurons.

Pharmacokinetics

- Absorption is complete
- Syrup & capsule forms
- Not bound to plasma proteins or tissues
- Metabolized in liver
- Half life 52-56 hr
- 10-20% of a dose is excreted unchanged the urine

Therapeutic uses

- Absence seizures

Adverse effects

- Gastric distress
  - nausea
  - vomiting
- Drowsiness, fatigue , hiccups, headaches

Lamotrigine

Mechanism of action

- Blockade of Na^+ channels
- Inhibits excitatory amino acid release (glutamate & aspartate)

Therapeutic Use

- As **add-on** therapy or as **monotherapy** in partial seizures
- Lennox-Gastaut syndrome

is a type of **epilepsy** with multiple different types of **seizures**, particularly tonic (stiffening) and atonic (drop) **seizures**. Intellectual development is usually impaired.

Pharmacokinetics

- Available as oral tablets
- Well absorbed from GIT
- Metabolized primarily by glucuronidation
- Does not induce or inhibit C. P-450 isozymes
- Half life approx. 24 hr

Side effects

- **Influenza-like symptoms.**
- Skin rashes (may progress to Steven –Johnson syndrome)
- Somnolence
- Blurred vision
- Diplopia
- Ataxia

Topiramate

Pharmacological Effects:

- *Well absorbed orally (80 %)*
- *Food has no effect on absorption*
- ***Has no effect on microsomal enzymes***
- *9-17 % protein bound (minimal)*
- *Mostly excreted unchanged in urine*
- *Plasma t½ 18-24 hrs*

Mechanism of Action:

- *Blocks sodium channels (membrane stabilization) and also potentiates the inhibitory effect of GABA.*

Topiramate (Cont.)

Clinical Uses:

- ***Can be used alone for partial, generalized tonic-clonic, and absence seizures.***
- ***Lennox- Gastaut syndrome (or lamotrigine, or valproate).***

Side effects:

- ***Psychological or cognitive dysfunction***
- ***Weight loss*** *(can be desirable side effect)*
- *Sedation, Dizziness, Fatigue*
- *Urolithiasis*
- *Paresthesias (abnormal sensation)*
- *Teratogenecity (in animal but not in human)*

Type of seizure	Choice among drugs
Partial seizures: Carbamazepine or phenytoin or valproate or lamotrigine.	
Generalized seizures:	
Tonic-clonic (grand mal)	Valproate or carbamazepine or phenytoin or lamotrigine
Myoclonic	Valproate, clonazepam
Absence	Valproate, ethosuximide
Atonic	Valproate

Drugs used for treatment of Status Epilepticus

- **Most seizures last from few seconds to few minutes. When seizures follow one another without recovery of consciousness, it is called "status epilepticus". It has a high mortality rate . Death is from cardio-respiratory failure.**

Antiepileptics used in status epilepticus

Intravenous injection of :

- Lorazepam (drug of choice)
- Diazepam
- Phenytoin
- Fosphenytoin
- Phenobarbital

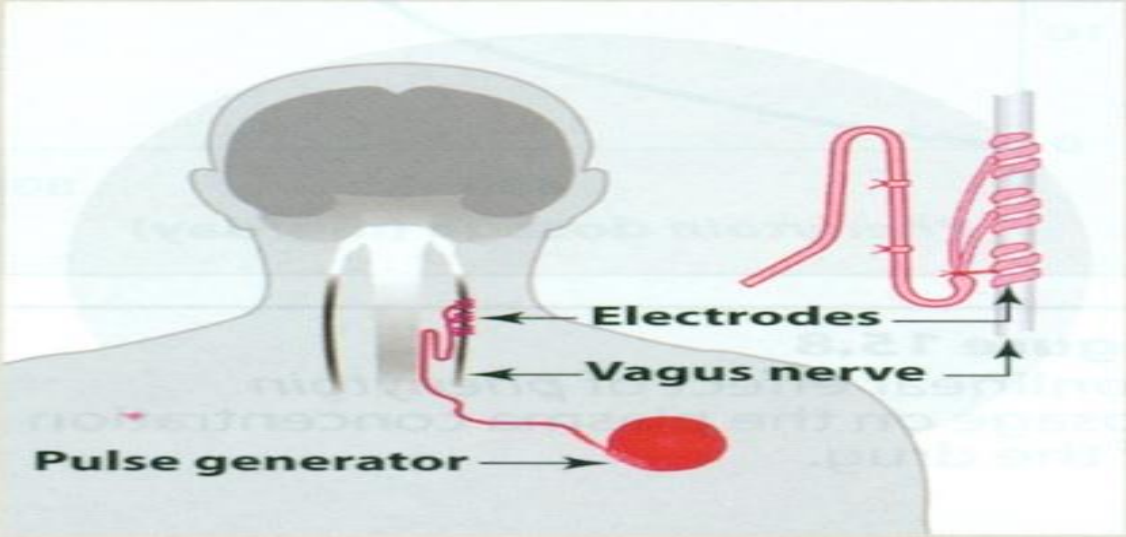
Vagal nerve stimulation

- It is an alternative for patients who have been refractory to multiple drugs .
- Who are sensitive to the many adverse effects of anti-epileptic drugs
- **It is an expensive procedure**

A

1 An implanted pulse generator connects to electrodes that coil around the vagus nerve.

2 The vagal nerve stimulator generates an electrical pulse that stimulates the vagus nerve.



3 This electrical stimulation prevents the abnormal electrical activity that can cause a seizure.

4 The patient activates the stimulator when they anticipate a seizure.

Treatment of Epilepsy:

- **Drugs****
- **Vagal nerve stimulation**
- **Surgery**
- **Ketogenic diet:** The **ketogenic diet** is a **high-fat,** adequate-protein, **low carbohydrate** diet that in medicine is used primarily to treat difficult-to-control (refractory) epilepsy in children
- When fat is the primary source of calories, ketones are formed

Pregnancy & anti-epileptics

- Seizure is very harmful for pregnant woman.
- No antiepileptic drug is safe in pregnancy.
- Monotherapy usually better than drug combination.
- Valproate & phenytoin are contraindicated during pregnancy.
- Patient has to continue therapy.

Summary

- Epilepsy is classified into partial or generalized according to the site of lesion.
- The exact mechanism of action of antiepileptics is not known.
- Phenytoin is mainly used for treatment of **generalized tonic-clonic seizures .**
- Carbamazepine is mainly used for treatment of **partial seizures**

Summary (con.)

- Sodium valproate is a broad spectrum antiepileptic drug.
- Lamotrigine & levetiracetam are used as monotherapy or adjunctive therapy in refractory cases.
- Lorazepam , diazepam , phenytoin are used intravenously for treatment of **status epilepticus**.