

---

# Epilepsy awareness and treatment satisfaction in Finland

## – An electronic survey for patients and close relation individuals

---

### Erkki Soini\*

MSc (health econ), CEO  
ESIOR Oy  
Kuopio, Finland  
erkki.soini@esior.fi

### Tuomas Lundström

BSc (psychology), Data Scientist  
ESIOR Oy  
Kuopio, Finland

### Maarit Taiha

MSc (Pharm)  
UCB Pharma Oy Finland  
Espoo, Finland

### Petri Mankinen

MSc (Pharm), Consultant  
ESIOR Oy  
Kuopio, Finland

### Kari Linden

PhD (Pharm), MSc (Econ),  
Adjunct Professor,  
Research Manager,  
University Pharmacy,  
Helsinki, Finland

\*Correspondence

---

Soini E, Lundström T, Taiha M, Mankinen P, Linden K: Epilepsy awareness and treatment satisfaction in Finland – An electronic survey for patients and close relation individuals. *Dosis* 38: 290–325, 2022

## Abstract

**Introduction:** Information on epilepsy awareness and treatment satisfaction among Finnish epilepsy patients and their close relation individuals (CRIs) have not to our knowledge been published. The main outcomes of this study were epilepsy awareness and treatment satisfaction.

**Materials and methods:** The descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted for Finnish adults with epilepsy (patients) and their CRIs between October 2019 and June 2020 by inviting pharmacy customers from University Pharmacy, Helsinki, and University of Eastern Finland Pharmacy to participate in the online survey. The patients were surveyed directly, whereas the CRIs were asked indirectly about their close relation patient. Logistic regression models explored potential medication satisfaction predictors.

**Results:** The eligible patients with a confirmed epilepsy diagnosis, who had visited a physician during the past two years due to epilepsy, and their CRIs were analysed separately (patients n = 311, CRIs n = 77). The patients reported a median of one (interquartile range one) regular anti-seizure medication (ASM). The patients had high (92%) self-reported ASM adherence. 93% and 91% of the patients reported satisfaction with the treatment and with their physician, respectively, and 72% valued a stable physician-patient relationship. Half of the patients reported that they have sufficient awareness of epilepsy and its treatment. Close to half of the patients wished for more information to be able to participate in decision-making more actively. In the logistic regression models, being very satisfied with epilepsy medication was robustly associated with higher age, being very satisfied with the treating physician, well-controlled seizures, not recommended to learn to live with adverse events, no need for better control of seizures or adverse events, and no willingness to change medication.

**Conclusions:** In general, epilepsy patients were satisfied with their epilepsy care for multiple reasons. However, gaps existed in epilepsy awareness. Many patients valued a stable physician-patient relationship.

**Keywords:** decision-making, epilepsy, knowledge, patient satisfaction, pharmacotherapy, seizures, substitute, physician-patient relationship

## Introduction

Epilepsy is one of the most common neurological diseases affecting around 50 million people around the world (Epilepsy. Fact Sheets 2019). In Finland, approximately 60,000 individuals have epilepsy (Finnish Epilepsy Association 2020). From the end of year 2008 to the end of year 2019, the number of Finns entitled to special refund reimbursement for epilepsy or comparable convulsive disorders has had a linear increasing trend (Kelasto 2021b, 2021c). The entitlements have increased by approximately 985 each year, being 68,087 entitlements in 2019 (Kelasto 2021b, 2021c) and representing approximately 1.2% of the Finnish population (Kelasto 2021b, 2021c, Suomen virallinen tilasto SVT 2021).

Finnish Current Care Guidelines for epilepsy state that epilepsy management aims at seizure-freedom with no significant adverse effects. Informing the patient about the disease, discussing different treatment options, and making a care plan and treatment-related decisions in collaboration with the patient are key factors that help the patient commit to the treatment plan and manage their disease. (Epilepsy. Current Care Guideline 2020)

The patient perspectives related to epilepsy management have been studied with a focus on the patients' knowledge about their own disease (Coker *et al.* 2010, Ross *et al.* 2010, Lee *et al.* 2015, Atakli *et al.* 2016, Del Claro Hopker *et al.* 2017, Peterson *et al.* 2017, Bahou *et al.* 2020, Sethi *et al.* 2020). Among others, the studies from Australia, Brazil, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Korea, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, and the United Kingdom suggested that there are awareness gaps, and that increasing epilepsy awareness could positively contribute to treatment outcomes and patient satisfaction.

The increased mortality burden due to epilepsy (Nevalainen *et al.* 2013) has been demonstrated in the Finnish setting, and reimbursements (Kelasto 2021a) and entitlements for ASMs are increasing (Kelasto 2021b, 2021c). Furthermore, cost-effectiveness of some anti-seizure medication (ASMs) has been shown (Soini *et al.* 2009, Väättäin *et al.* 2020).

Studies of the Finnish epilepsy patients or

individuals with close relations to the patient (i.e., substitute responders, henceforth close relation individuals, CRIs) have not to our knowledge been published. Consequently, it is valuable to explore feedback from patients and close individuals about epilepsy management in Finland.

The two main targets of the present Finnish survey were to explore epilepsy awareness and treatment satisfaction among epilepsy patients and their CRIs. These topics were considered important because most patients may not fully comprehend epilepsy treatment (Coker *et al.* 2010, Atakli *et al.* 2016, Del Claro Hopker *et al.* 2017, Bahou *et al.* 2020). Patients' knowledge gaps of epilepsy and its treatment may compromise optimal disease management and cause feelings of stigma (Atakli *et al.* 2016). Personal safety, legal and career issues may also be affected, and daily life can become restricted due to lack of knowledge (Coker *et al.* 2010). In addition, it is important that epilepsy management and decision-making are in line with patient preferences, characteristics, and daily life (Ring *et al.* 2019). Regarding effectiveness, side effects, convenience, global satisfaction, and control of life, the most satisfied patients can also be – on average – the most adherent to their treatment (Sweileh *et al.* 2011). Finally, potential predictors of treatment satisfaction were studied.

## Materials and methods

**Design:** The study was conducted as an online survey. The participants included in the study had an epilepsy diagnosis, were 18 years of age or above at the time of participation and visited a physician because of epilepsy within the last two years, or were CRIs of such participants.

The participants were recruited from University Pharmacy, Helsinki, and the University of Eastern Finland Pharmacy around the Finnish mainland, when purchasing drugs indicated for the treatment of epilepsy. Alternatively, an SMS was sent to individuals who had given permission to be contacted by the Helsinki University Pharmacy loyalty customer system and had purchased epilepsy drugs after the year 2016. CRIs were recruited by means of information sheets and an answering link, which had been

given to the participants with an epilepsy diagnosis.

Informed consent to participate was received from all participants and their CRI, if a CRI responded. The data were collected between 30 October 2019 and 1 June 2020.

**Questionnaire:** The online survey was conducted electronically in Finnish using the Webropol 3.0 survey tool. The survey consisted of 44 questions for the patient and 47 questions for the CRI (**Appendix 1**). Many questions were derived from the earlier European survey for epilepsy patients and clinicians (Ross *et al.* 2010). The questions to the CRIs (e.g., family member or friend) addressed their perception of the patient's situation, while the patients themselves were asked about their own condition. The questions included single-choice, multiple-choice, and Likert scale questions about preference. Adherence to a regular ASM

during the last week was based on the responder's self-assessment of the patient's actions (have taken all; most; approximately half; less than half; none).

**Analyses:** The data were collected using Webropol, managed using Webropol, Microsoft Excel Office 365, and statistical software R 4.0.1, and analysed with R and Stata MP 14.2.

Descriptive analyses including observations (n), proportions of non-continuous variables, and medians and interquartile ranges (IQR), and means and standard deviations (SD) for continuous variables were conducted with Stata and R. For censored distributions, only medians with IQRs were reported. Groups with less than five observations were not reported exactly and were denoted with a less than marking (<). Due to the responder heterogeneity, cross-sectional design with some recall questions, and the descriptive aim of the study, univariate sta-

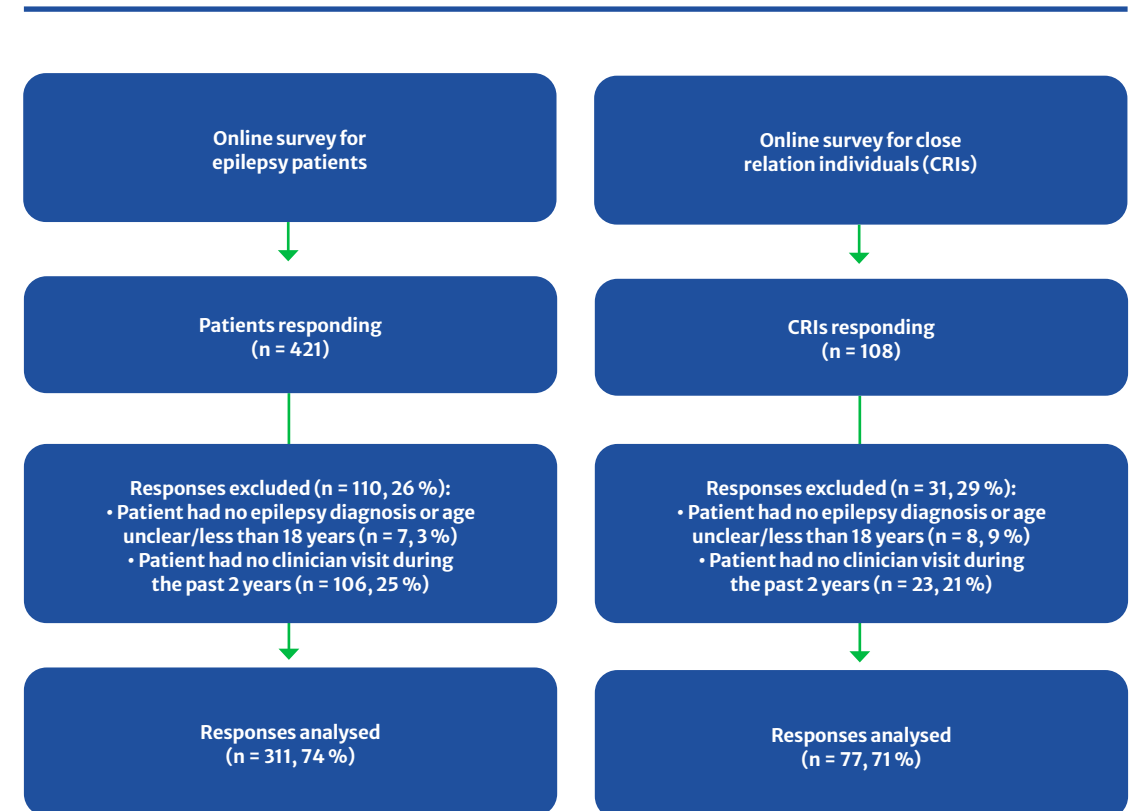


Figure 1. Epilepsy survey flow-chart. CRI = close relation individual.

tistical testing was not done for all parameters.

Associations between medication satisfaction and its predictors were univariately explored. Both univariate and multivariate results were reported to demonstrate potential differences between them. Fifty-six multivariate logistic regression analyses were assessed based on the univariate correlations found and used iteratively to explore and assess the potentially independent associations between medication satisfaction and various patient- or treatment-related characteristics and awareness. The aim of the exploration was to find a robust, balanced, efficient, and parsimonious logit model in line with the Occam's razor principle (i.e., explanation with the fewest parameters is usually optimal), which applied a dynamic threshold for the statistical significance of included parameters. Lower information criteria scores and higher correct class predictions were used as the measures of models' performance. Bayesian model averaging was not applied for two reasons: the aim was to find a simple statistical model with the highest predictive capabilities directly based on data, and the number of variables included needed to be relatively small based on the number of observations in the data. The impact of predictors, information criteria, and the predictive capabilities of models as well as areas under the curve and sensitivity-specificity graphics were reported. (**Appendix 2**).

## Results

### Participants and treatments

Due to screening criteria, some survey responses were excluded. A total of 311 patient and 77 CRI responses were included in the study. (**Figure 1**)

The survey framework is summarised in **Table 1**. On average, epilepsy was diagnosed at the age of 24.7 (SD 16.2, median 20.0) and 26.8 (SD 20.0, median 19.5) years based on patient and CRI responses, respectively. The respective mean times from epilepsy diagnosis were 19.1 (SD 14.8, median 14.5) and 17.5 (SD 16.0, median 13.0) years. The CRIs were spouses of the patient (58%), children (16%), parents (14%), or siblings, other relatives, or close friends (12%). 58% of the CRIs lived in

the same household with the patient or knew the patient's condition very well.

74% [71%] of the patients [CRIs, in square bracket] indicated that the epilepsy is well managed and controlled, and they [patient] can function well in studies or work. 20% of the patients (both patients and CRIs pooled due to the <5 observations in the answers) had epilepsy-related seizures mostly under control, and the patient could study or work moderately well on most days. For 6% the seizures were not under control, and ability to study and work was significantly limited.

34% [44%] of patients were using on-demand ASMs, 67% [80%] of them had one on-demand ASM, and 50% [69%] used on-demand ASMs less than once in 3 months. For the patients who were not adherent (8% patients and CRIs pooled), the main reasons for not taking all the prescribed regular ASM were forgetting it (77%), disturbing adverse events (AEs) (23%), and 16% stated that a lower dosage was adequate to control the seizures.

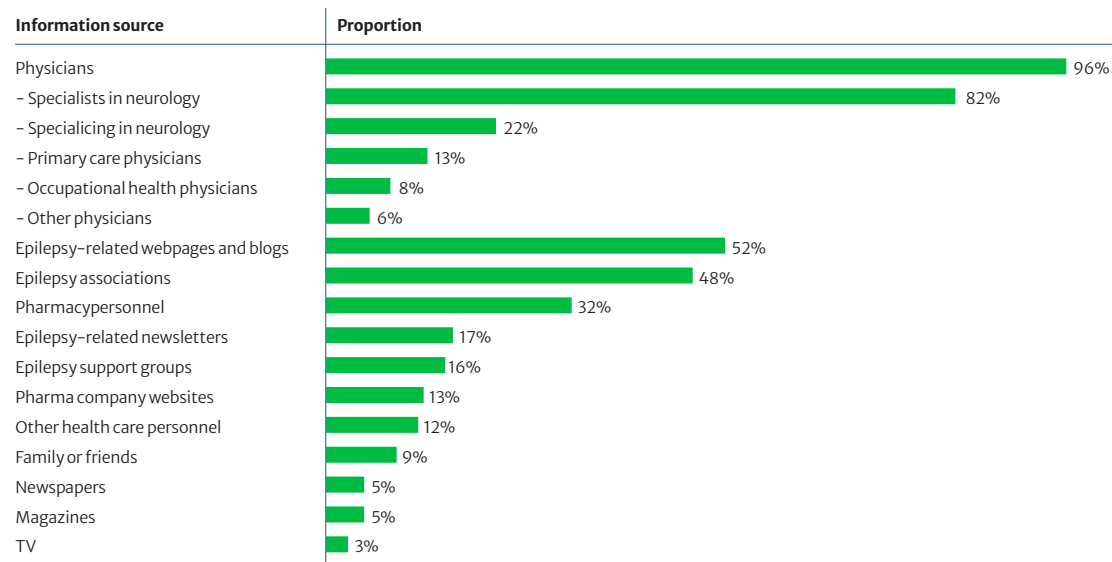
46% [33%] of the patients [CRIs] reported that their [patient's] pharmacotherapy focused solely on seizure control, 27% [35%] reported that their [patient's] treatment focused mostly on seizure control, and 22% [32%] indicated that their [patient's] pharmacotherapy focused on seizure control and AEs equally. The rest of the patients responded that their pharmacotherapy focused mostly (2%) or completely (2%) on avoiding or minimising AEs.

In general, the patients were experiencing multiple AEs. 88% [92%] of the patients [CRIs] had experienced AEs (mean 4.7, SD 3.6, n = 298, median 4.0 [mean 4.2, SD 2.9, n = 66, median 3.0]) in the past two years, and 86% [90%] were currently experiencing AEs (mean 3.0, SD 2.6, n = 260, median 3.0 [mean 2.8, SD 2.5, n = 59, median 2.0]). Cognitive dulling, fatigue, concentration difficulties, anxiety or associated mood changes, weight increase or decrease, sleep disorder, and headache had been the most common epilepsy medication-related AEs during the past two years, as well as at the time of the survey, each demonstrating over 25% prevalence. Aspects of patients' lives most impacted by AEs were emotional state, generic quality of life, sleep, work, and driving.

**Table 1. The PICOSTEPS\* framework of the survey.**

PICOSTEPS	Patient responders (n = 311)	CRI responders (n = 77)
<b>Patients:</b> Gender: n (%) Not stated 13 (3) Age, mean in years:  Comorbidity: #  Hypertension: Depressive disorder: Migraine: Asthma: Anxiety disorder: Other long-term disease: Disturbing allergy: Back problems: Arthrosis of hip or knee: Other skin disease:	Women: 220 (71) Men: 82 (26) 43.6 (SD 16.0), median 41.5 (IQR 25.0) Mean 2.4 (SD 2.2), median 2.0 (IQR 2.0)  23% 22% 16% 15% 13% 12% 12% 11% 11% 10%	Women: 52 (68) Men: 21 (27) 44.1 (SD 18.2), median 42.0 (IQR 33.0) Mean 2.3 (SD 1.9), median 2.0 (IQR 3.0)  21% 16% 16% 16% <7% 19% 8% 12% 10% <7%
<b>Interventions</b> Prescription for regular ASM  1 ASM (%): 2 ASMs (%): 3 or more ASMs (%):	During the last two years Median: 1 (IQR 1)  157 (52) 87 (29) 56 (19)	During the last two years Median: 2 (IQR 2)  29 (42) 23 (33) 17 (25)
<b>Outcomes</b> <b>Setting:</b> Responders: n (%):	Awareness, satisfaction. Satisfaction assessment: regressions. SMS to loyalty program patients: 237 (76) Forms with response link delivered in community pharmacies: 74 (24)	Awareness, satisfaction. Satisfaction assessment: regressions. SMS to loyalty program patients: 42 (55) Forms with response link delivered in community pharmacies: 35 (45)
<b>Time:</b> For recruitment & responding	30/10/2019 – 1/6/2020	30/10/2019 – 1/6/2020
<b>Effects:</b> Regular ASM: 100% adherent (%): Less than 50% adherent (%):	Last seven days 274 (92) 7 (2)	Last seven days 63 (91) 0 (0)
<b>Perspectives:</b>	Patient	CRI
<b>Sensitivity analyses:</b>	Regression fits (full and parsimonious)	Regression fits (full and parsimonious)

AE = adverse event; ASM = anti-seizure medication; CRI = close relation individual; PICOSTEPS = patients-intervention-comparator-outcomes-setting-time-effects-perspectives-sensitivity analyses; SD = standard deviation; yrs = years; IQR = interquartile range. \* The Finnish PICOSTEPS evidence-based framework (Soini 2017, Soini et al. 2017) is in line with the common PICO evidence-based medicine framework, a health technology assessment (HTA) guideline prepared by the Finnish Medicines Agency (Finnish Medicines Agency Fimea 2014), Finnish HTA handbook (Mäkelä 2017), and Finnish guidance for health economic evaluations (PPB 2019). # Patient comorbidities with a prevalence of <7% that were not separately listed in the Table 1: 7% - loss of hearing, other mental disorder, other neurologic disease; 6% - cancer, dyslipidaemia, other musculoskeletal disorder, tinnitus; 5% - other digestion disorder; 4% - cataract, diabetes, disability caused by accident, other arthrosis; 3% - inflammatory bowel disease, stroke, urinary incontinence; 2% - chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, glaucoma, neck problems, osteoporosis, other cardiovascular disease, psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis; and <2% - alcohol use disorder, coronary heart disease, heart failure, macular degeneration, mania, other lung disease, Parkinson's disease, psychosis.



**Figure 2.** Sources of information about pharmacotherapies reported by epilepsy patients.

42% [61%] of the patients [CRIs] had been told by their physician that they [patient] need to learn to live with AEs. For medication changes, 11% [13%] were very keen and 26% [41%] were somewhat keen, while 43% [28%] were not very willing and 20% [18%] were not willing at all to change their medication if suggested by a physician, respectively.

### Awareness

51% [54%] patients [CRIs] reported that they [patient] have sufficient information about epilepsy, while the rest felt that patients lacked knowledge. When asked how much the patients know about different options of pharmacotherapy for epilepsy treatment, 19% [18%] of the patients [CRIs] reported that they [patient] knew ‘very much’. 70% of the patients (patients and CRIs pooled) were aware of the different options to ‘some extent’, and 10% were ‘not aware at all’. 49% [46%] of the patients [CRIs] felt they [patient] would like to know more about epilepsy and its treatment options.

The patients reported median 4.0 (IQR 3.0) sources of information (max 5 sources allowed, **Figure 2**); the respective number among the CRIs was 3.0 (IQR 2.0). Information searches were not frequent as 86% [80%] of the patients

[CRIs] reported that they [patient] search for information less than once a month or never.

41% [37%] of the patients [CRIs] expressed that they [patient] understand different treatment options and their effects, and they make decisions about pharmacotherapy in cooperation with their physician. 31% [35%] of the patients [CRIs] reported that they [patient] have general awareness, and participate in some decisions. The remaining 28% indicated that their physician makes all the decisions related to the pharmacotherapy.

51% [46% based on the CRIs] of the patients want to understand the pharmacotherapy options and their possible effects to be able to participate in all decisions. 30% [31%] of the patients would like to have a general understanding and involvement in decision-making. 18% [23%] of the patients want a physician to make all decisions on the epilepsy pharmacotherapy. 20% [29%] of the patients [CRIs] reported that the patient’s individual needs, lifestyle, and preferences were taken into consideration in their epilepsy management very much, or to some extent by 33% [43%], whereas the rest felt that they were not considered very much (patients and CRIs pooled 26%) or at all (19%).

The frequency of discussion themes and

Discussion Theme	Discussed					Discussion initiator		
	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Patient	Clinician	Both
Holistic health	22%	21%	30%	19%	9%	28%	29%	43%
Other related to epilepsy	14%	16%	31%	23%	16%	19%	28%	53%
Impact of epilepsy on daily living	11%	0%	0%	65%	24%	34%	19%	47%
Mental well-being	11%	14%	27%	26%	22%	36%	26%	38%
AEs related to epilepsy medications	11%	18%	31%	24%	17%	44%	22%	34%
Need to change epilepsy medication	8%	2%	33%	31%	16%	20%	34%	46%
New or different medications for epilepsy	2%	11%	23%	31%	32%	10%	68%	22%

**Figure 3.** Frequency of discussed themes and discussion initiators for the themes. Patient responses. AE = adverse event.

Anti-seizure medication Goal	Very important		Very satisfied	
	Patients	CRIs	Patients	CRIs
Reducing seizure frequency	96%	97%	70%	67%
Not interfering with daily activities	90%	86%	63%	71%
Reducing seizure severity	85%	95%	65%	71%
Improving ability to stay on treatment plan long-term	83%	86%	64%	63%
Avoiding cognitive dulling as an AE	82%	84%	38%	50%
Avoiding depression as an AE	79%	89%	56%	58%
Avoiding anxiety as an AE	78%	89%	53%	54%
Avoiding behavioral disturbances as an AE	78%	81%	65%	58%
Housework success	77%	70%	70%	75%
Participation in studies and working life	76%	59%	59%	67%
Reducing changes to treatment plan due to AEs	58%	76%	62%	50%
Avoiding AEs generally	49%	78%	49%	42%
Reducing titration period	43%	70%	56%	67%
Avoiding the need for blood monitoring	8%	16%	58%	58%

**Figure 4.** The proportions of respondents rating anti-seizure medication goals to very important and very satisfied. CRI = close relation individual. AE = adverse event.

discussion initiators are presented in **Figure 3**. 46% [47%] of the patients [CRIs] indicated no barriers for them [patient] in initiating ASM that had been or needed to be discussed with the physician. The three most highlighted obstacles by patient [CRI] related to ASM initiation included AEs 47% [30%], safety 20% [11%], and awareness 14% [11%].

### Satisfaction

93% [85%] the patients [CRIs] reported satisfaction with their [patient’s] ASM and 55% [32%] were very satisfied, while 7% [15%] were dissatisfied. In addition, most patients were satisfied with the treating physician, as 91%

[92%] of patients [CRIs] reported satisfaction (56% [46%] very satisfied) and only 9% [8%] were dissatisfied with their physician.

The patients and CRIs were asked about the importance of various ASM-related goals and the patient’s satisfaction (**Figure 4**). Nearly all goals were considered very important, and the responses indicated high satisfaction with most of the goals. Avoiding cognitive dulling as an AE had the lowest satisfaction level among the goals, which was in line with its high prevalence observed in this survey.

When asked how to improve ASM management, 43% [28%] of the patients [CRIs] did not feel a need for improvement for them [patient].

25% [37%] of the patients [CRIs] wished there were less AEs and 11% [13%] hoped for better seizure control. The remaining 21% [22%] wanted both better seizure control and fewer AEs. 14% of the patients reported that they had discontinued their ASM because of its disturbing effects on important daily activities.

73% [67%] of the patients [CRIs] regarded the importance of continuous physician-patient relationship as very high. 22% of the patient responders considered it somewhat and 5% not at all important. 52% of patients [57% based on CRIs] regularly met the same physician at their [patient's] appointment: 29% [34%] always and 23% [28%] usually met the same physician, whereas 31% [25%] usually and 17% [12%] always saw a different physician.

55% of the responders in the logit models were very satisfied with the ASM. Being very satisfied with the ASM was robustly and independently associated with a patient's higher age, a patient being very satisfied with their physician, a patient's well-controlled seizures, a patient not being told by the physician that they need to learn to live with AEs, no need for better control of seizures or adverse events, and no willingness to change medication in all the

logistic regression models explored. Based on a non-parsimonious logit model approach, also a general understanding about medication decisions and taking part in some medication decisions, considering individual needs, lifestyle, and preferences very much, and no attempts to search for information related to epilepsy or ASMs predicted high satisfaction with the ASM. (**Appendix 2**)

The parsimonious model had a higher predictive performance with indicative ( $p < 0.100$ : a patient does not want to participate in decision-making) and some statistically insignificant and non-indicative ( $p > 0.100$ : number of continuous medications, the treating physician makes all the decisions) parameters, which were left in the model for performance reasons. The performance of models (correct classifications: non-parsimonious 80%; parsimonious 79%) was acceptable and they created predictive value. The predictive performance of the parsimonious model can be up to 5 percentage points higher compared to the non-parsimonious model when predicting the bigger ( $n = 278$ ) population included in the parsimonious model. (**Appendix 2**)

**Figure 5** depicts the probability predictions and impacts with statistically significant

parameters that can be impacted, and the default class size of 45% (i.e., the predicted class size). The total impact of the most influential (over 20 percentage points min-max, i.e., yes-no prediction range) parameters on the satisfaction with the ASM were need for AE control (39 percentage points), satisfaction with the physician (35), information related to epilepsy or its medication (28), need to live with AEs (27), seizure control (27), participation in decision making (27), and willing to medication change (27).

## Discussion

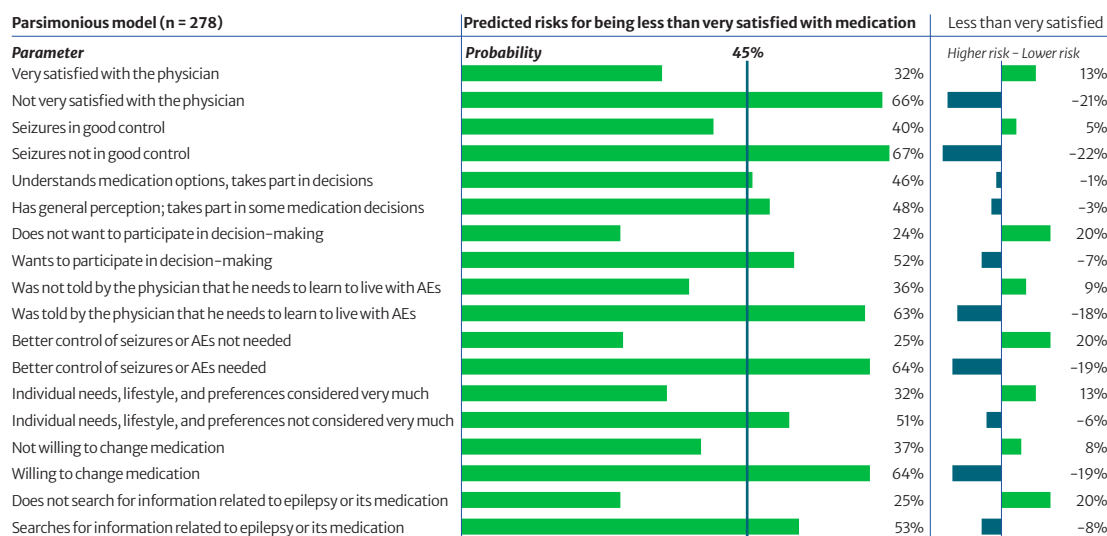
The purpose of the survey was to ascertain epilepsy treatment-related awareness and satisfaction in Finland. The results from individuals with epilepsy and CRIs indicated that the awareness of Finnish epilepsy patients about their condition and ASM pharmacotherapy could be higher. According to the survey, 19% [18%] of patients [CRIs] reported that they [patient] knew very much about different options of pharmacotherapy. About half of the patients knew enough about epilepsy and pharmacotherapy, and about half wished to know more. Similar proportions of patients in the European survey perceived a lack of information or thought that they knew very much (Ross et al. 2010).

Based on other earlier studies, gaps exist in epilepsy patients' knowledge about their condition (Coker et al. 2010, Lee et al. 2015, Atakli et al. 2016, Del Claro Hopker et al. 2017, Peterson et al. 2017, Bahou et al. 2020, Sethi et al. 2020) and they may have misconceptions about the management of their disease (Coker et al. 2010, Atakli et al. 2016, Del Claro Hopker et al. 2017, Bahou et al. 2020). However, epilepsy patients in this survey were generally satisfied with their treatment and information searches were infrequent. Physicians, epilepsy-related web-pages and blogs, epilepsy associations, and pharmacy personnel were the most common sources of information related to the treatment options for the patient. This is in line with the European survey (Ross et al. 2010), although epilepsy associations (4.8%) and pharmacy personnel (32%) were somewhat more common information sources in Finland than in the European survey (21 and 23%, respectively).

Physicians, pharmacy personnel, and the internet were also common sources of medication information in Finnish Medicines Agency Fimea's population survey (Silvennoinen et al. 2018). The Fimea survey differed by focusing on information related to medicine used by the patient, and the package leaflet was an additional common information source.

Avoiding cognitive dulling as an AE had the lowest satisfaction level and highest prevalence among the treatment goals. In this and in the earlier European survey (Ross et al. 2010), patients reported similar goals between seizure and AE control with ASM management. However, there were numerical differences between patient and CRI responses in this survey. For example, CRIs reported a higher number of ASMs, more willingness to change medication, a slightly higher prevalence of current AEs, more worries related to AEs and safety, more importance in avoiding AEs, and a higher proportion of patients that had been told by their physician that they need to learn to live with AEs. However, patients reported more sources of information and a higher number of current AEs, which may result from the subjective knowledge regarding the patient's sources of information as well as experience and knowledge related to AEs. CRIs were less satisfied with the patient's ASM and felt a greater need to improve it. However, the difference in ASM satisfaction between patients and CRIs was not significant or independent based on a multivariate approach. Consequently, CRIs may have responded based on patients with more severe epilepsy or challenging epilepsy care, and thereby enlarged the scope of this study. Or CRIs may not know all epilepsy-related matters of patients.

41% of the patients report that they currently understand different treatment options and make decisions in cooperation with the physician, whereas the physician makes all the decisions for 28% patients. 51% of patients would like to understand different options and at least 10% would like to participate more in decision-making. Understanding different treatment options, their effects, and making decisions in cooperation with their physician was not as common in the European survey (25%) (Ross et al. 2010).



**Figure 5.** Risks for less than very high treatment satisfaction (based on the statistically significant parameters in the parsimonious model of all responders, Appendix 2).

Comorbidities were common. 84% of all responders reported that patients had at least two long-term diseases. In a study with a Finnish general population sample not restricted to ill individuals or individuals with epilepsy, 55% of the responders reported two or more conditions (Saarni *et al.* 2006). The most common comorbid conditions with over 10% prevalence in this epilepsy survey (hypertension, depressive disorder, migraine, asthma, anxiety disorder, disturbing allergy, back problems, arthritis of hip or knee) are likely to have a negative impact on the health-related quality of life of epilepsy patients because they can decrease it (Saarni *et al.* 2006). In a large population-based cohort study by Selassie *et al.* (2014), a median of 4.0 comorbid conditions was reported for epilepsy patients.

Patients with epilepsy value treatment that is responsive to their life context. They consider ASMs as appropriate treatment, but since AEs of ASMs have implications on daily function and well-being, the appropriate management of AEs is important. (Ring *et al.* 2019) In this survey, high self-reported treatment adherence was observed. However, most patients were experiencing AEs. 42% of the patients had been told by their physician that they need to learn to live with the AEs, which is lower than reported in the European survey (59%) (Ross *et al.* 2010). More patients in the European survey (Ross *et al.* 2010) had also stopped their medication because of its disturbing effects on important daily activities. In the earlier survey, nonadherence has been reported in one third of patients with epilepsy (Ross *et al.* 2010), whereas in a study by Sweileh *et al.* (2011), nonadherence was reported in 64% of the responders and higher medication adherence was associated with treatment satisfaction (Sweileh *et al.* 2011). The high percentage of prescription ASMs and excellent adherence to ASMs may be influenced by the fact that the participants were recruited through pharmacies, were purchasing, or had purchased ASMs, had visited a physician during the past two years, and most of them had good seizure control.

Nearly all (93%) of the patient responders were generally satisfied with their treatment. Only 7% were dissatisfied with treatment or the treating clinician. These findings

are in line with the reported European results (Ross *et al.* 2010).

The probability of being very satisfied with the ASM increased independently in a balanced logit model as a function of a non-changeable parameter (higher age) and many parameters that can be potentially impacted. Of impactable parameters, the most influential were need for AE control, satisfaction with the physician, and information related to epilepsy or its medication.

Interestingly, nearly 90% of all respondents reported that the patient had rarely or never discussed the impact of epilepsy on their daily living with their physician although epilepsy, and in particular seizures, may place major physical, psychological, and social burdens on the patient (Fazekas *et al.* 2021). Most responders (74%) reported that the patient's epilepsy was well-controlled, and the patient can function well in studies or work, which might suggest no need to regularly discuss the impact of epilepsy in daily life. The impact of epilepsy in daily life is always part of epilepsy treatment counselling after diagnosis (Current Care Guidelines, Epilepsy, 2020). However, the survey did not ask if daily life and other aspects are discussed with other members of a multi-professional team participating in epilepsy management. Given the current Covid-19 pandemic, our results represent the "normal" with good possibilities for face-to-face encounters. The Covid-19 pandemic may have posed challenges for epilepsy management (Teng *et al.* 2021).

This survey had some essential limitations. First, the results of this study are based on subjective patient- or CRI-reported outcomes. The study sample included adult pharmacy customers and patients with a physician visit during the past two years, which could potentially exclude non-adherent or inpatient epilepsy patients. Due to responder burden, the survey questionnaire did not cover all potentially important matters such as quality of life, social and career benefits, or ease of getting support with the disease. Furthermore, survey questions focused mostly on the relationship between physician and patient, although other healthcare professionals such as epilepsy nurses and pharmacists have a role

in patient counselling and medication information.

Future studies of the subject matter should also involve clinician respondents and non-pharmacy customers to explore a more diverse view of epilepsy in Finland. Lastly, real-world estimates of epilepsy burden on the patient, caregiver, and CRI as well as their associations with awareness and satisfaction would be important to establish.

## Conclusions

This survey revealed that more than 90 % of the epilepsy patients in Finland were satisfied with their epilepsy management. Self-reported adherence to ASMs was high among responders. About half of all responders indicated that the patients would like to know more about epilepsy management; however, most patients did not actively seek information. Most of the patients valued a continuous relationship with the treating physician. In this survey, treatment satisfaction was associated with satisfaction with the treating physician and no willingness to change medication, controlled seizures, no need to learn to live with AEs, no need for better control of seizures or AEs, general understanding and taking part in some medication decisions, valuing individual needs, lifestyle, and preferences, and no need to search for information related to epilepsy or its medication. Of the variables that cannot be impacted, higher age was associated with higher treatment satisfaction.

## Tiivistelmä

### Epilepsiapotilaiden tietämys sairaudestaan ja tyytyväisyys hoitoonsa – sähköinen kyselytutkimus suomalaisille potilaille ja heidän läheisilleen

#### Erkki Soini\*

TtM (terveyсталous),  
toimitusjohtaja  
ESiOR Oy  
Kuopio  
erkki.soini@esior.fi

#### Tuomas Lundström

FK (psykologia),  
data scientist  
ESiOR Oy  
Kuopio

#### Maarit Taiha

Proviisori  
UCB Pharma Oy Finland  
Espoo

#### Petri Mankinen

Proviisori, konsultti  
ESiOR Oy  
Kuopio

#### Kari Linden

Dosentti,  
FaT, KTM, tutkimuspäällikkö  
Yliopiston Apteekki  
Helsinki

\*Kirjeenvaihto

**Johdanto:** Tutkimustietoa suomalaisten epilepsiapotilaiden epilepsiatietoisuudesta ja hoitotyytyväisyydestä sekä epilepsiapotilaiden läheisiltä saatua tietoa tästä aiheesta ei ole käsittäksemme julkaistu aiemmin. Tämän tutkimuksen päätutkimuskysymyksenä tarkasteltiin potilaiden tietämystä epilepsiasta ja lääkehoitovaihtoehdoista sekä hoitotyytyväisyyttä.

**Materiaalit ja menetelmät:** Kuvaileva poikileikkaustutkimus toteutettiin suomalaisille aikuisille epilepsiapotilaille ja heidän läheisilleen lokakuun 2019 ja kesäkuun 2020 välisenä aikana kutsumalla Yliopiston Apteekin ja Itä-Suomen yliopiston apteekin epilepsiaa sairastavia asiakkaita osallistumaan sähköiseen kyselyyn. Potilailta kysyttiin omista ja läheisiltä heille läheisen epilepsiapotilaan epilepsiaan liittyvistä asioista. Potilas- ja läheisvastaajien tulokset raportoitiin erikseen tavanomaisin tilastosuurein kuten keskiarvoin, mediaanin ja osuuksin. Logististen regressiomallien avulla tutkittiin lääkehoitoon liittyvään erittäin hyvään tyytyväisyyteen yhteydessä olevia tekijöitä.

**Tulokset:** Analyysiin sisällytettiin kahden viime vuoden aikana epilepsian takia lääkärillä käyneiden aikuisten suomalaisten epilepsiadiagnoosin omaavien henkilöiden tietoja (vastaajina potilaat n = 311, läheiset n = 77). Keskimäärin potilaat olivat 40-vuotiaita ja heillä oli kaksi liitännäissairautta. Potilastavastajien mukaan käytössä oli yksi (mediaani, jonka kvartaaliväli yksi) säännöllisesti otettava epilepsialääke. Potilailla oli korkea itse-raportoitu hoitoon sitoutumisen aste (92 %). Puolella potilaista oli mielestään riittävä epilepsiatietoisuus. 93 % potilaista oli tyytyväisiä hoitoonsa, 91 % oli tyytyväisiä lääkäreihin ja 72 % arvosti hoitosuhdetta saman lääkärin kanssa. Lähes puolet potilaista haluaisi lisää tietoa sairaudestaan, jotta he voisivat osallistua päätöksentekoon aktiivisemmin. Logistisissa regressiomalleissa korkea tyytyväisyys potilaan lääkehoitoon oli selvästi yhteydessä potilaan korkeampaan ikään, korkeaan tyytyväisyyteen hoitavasta lääkäristä, hyvässä hallinnassa oleviin kohtauksiin, lääkärin kehottamattomuuteen elää hättävaihtokäytön kanssa,

kohtauksien tai haittojen paremman kontrollin tarpeen puuttumiseen ja haluttomuuteen muuttaa lääkitystä.

**Johdopäätökset:** Epilepsiapotilaat ovat yleisesti tyytyväisiä hoitoonsa monista syistä. Tietämyksessä epilepsiasta ja lääkehoitovaihtoehdoista koetaan kuitenkin puutteita. Monet arvostavat jatkuvaa lääkäri-potilas-suhdetta.

**Avainsanat:** epilepsia, läheinen, lääkehoito, potilastyytyväisyys, päätöksenteko, tieto, tyytyväisyys, ymmärrettävyys

## Data availability statement

Data from non-interventional studies is outside of UCB's data sharing policy and is unavailable for sharing.

## Conflicts of interest

ESiOR Oy, Kuopio, Finland received financial support for the study from UCB Pharma Oy Finland, Espoo, Finland. ESiOR Oy carries out studies and other services for several organisations and projects, including the producers and marketers of epilepsy treatments. UCB is the manufacturer and UCB Pharma Oy Finland is the marketer of several anti-seizure medications in Finland. University Pharmacy, Helsinki, Finland received financial support for study responder recruitment from ESiOR Oy.

KL received no direct financial support for the preparation of this manuscript as an individual and has received lecturing fees from Viatrix Oy and The Finnish Society for Rheumatology.

## Acknowledgements

The authors express their greatest gratitude to the organisations carrying out responder recruitment (University Pharmacy branches and the University of Eastern Finland Pharmacy) and to survey responders.

The authors acknowledge Mari Savolainen, PhD (Pharm) from UCB Pharma Oy Finland, who served as scientific advisor, Anne Tarvainen from ESiOR Oy for help with literature

retrieval, initial manuscript drafting, and initial language revision, and Sandra Hänninen for the final language revision.

The study was sponsored by UCB Pharma Oy Finland.

Author roles. Study: management (ES, KL), conceptualisation (ES, KL), design (all); data: acquisition (all), management (ES, TL), interpretation (all); analysis: design (ES), implementation (ES), interpretation (all); manuscript: drafting (ES), critical revision (all), and final approval (all).

## References

- Atakli WM, Ihbesheh MS, Jarar IS et al.: Self-reported medication adherence and treatment satisfaction in patients with epilepsy. *Epilepsy Behav* 21: 301–305, 2016
- Bahou Y, Alzghoul L, Alajloni EM et al.: Knowledge and awareness among patients with epilepsy observed at Jordan University Hospital. *Epilepsy Behav* 102: 106697, 2020
- Coker MF, Bhargava S, Fitzgerald M, et al.: What do people with epilepsy know about their condition? Evaluation of a subspecialty clinic population. *Seizure* 20: 55–59, 2010
- Del Claro Hopker C, Berberian AP, Massi G et al.: The individual with epilepsy: perceptions about the disease and implications on quality of life. *Codas* 29: e20150236, 2017
- Epilepsy. Current Care Guideline 2020. *Epilepsia* (aikuiset). Suomalaisen Lääkäriseuran Duodecimin ja Suomen Neurologinen Yhdistys ry:n asettama työryhmä. Suomalainen Lääkäriseura Duodecim, Helsinki, 2020 (accessed 27.1.2021). [www.kaypahoito.fi/hoi50072](http://www.kaypahoito.fi/hoi50072)
- Epilepsy. Fact Sheets. WHO, 2019 (accessed 27.1.2021). [www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/epilepsy](http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/epilepsy)
- Fazekas B, Megaw B, Eade D, Kronfeld N: Insights into the real-life experiences of people living with epilepsy: A qualitative netnographic study. *Epilepsy Behav* 116: 107729, 2021
- Finnish Epilepsy Association, 2020 (accessed 27.1.2021). [www.epilepsia.fi/en/web/epilepsialiitto/frontpage](http://www.epilepsia.fi/en/web/epilepsialiitto/frontpage)
- Finnish Medicines Agency Fimea. Fimea kehittää, arvioi ja informoi-julkaisusarja 2/2012. Fimean suositus lääkkeiden hoidollisen ja taloudellisen arvion arvioinnista (pdf). 2. korjattu painos. Lääkealan turvallisuus- ja kehittämiskeskus Fimea, 2014
- Kelasto. Lääkekorvausten saajat ja reseptitiedot, 2008–2019. Kela, 2021a (accessed 27.1.2021). [http://raportit.kela.fi/ibi\\_apps/WFServlet?IBIF\\_ex=NIT137AL](http://raportit.kela.fi/ibi_apps/WFServlet?IBIF_ex=NIT137AL)
- Kelasto. Voimassa olleet, alkaneeet ja päättyneet lääkekorvausoikeudet 1986–2017, 2018. Kela, 2021b (accessed 27.1.2021). [http://raportit.kela.fi/ibi\\_apps/WFServlet?IBIF\\_ex=NIT084AL](http://raportit.kela.fi/ibi_apps/WFServlet?IBIF_ex=NIT084AL)
- Kelasto. Voimassa olleet, alkaneeet ja päättyneet lääkekorvausoikeudet 2019–. Kela, 2021c (accessed 27.1.2021). Voimassa olleet, alkaneeet ja päättyneet lääkekorvausoikeudet (9105RS002) [kela.fi](http://kela.fi)
- Lee S-A, Lee B-I, Korean QoL in Epilepsy Study Group: Association of knowledge about epilepsy with mood and self-efficacy in Korean people with epilepsy. *Epilepsy Behav* 52: 149–53, 2015
- Nevalainen O, Raitanen J, Ansakorpi H et al.: Long-term mortality risk by cause of death in newly diagnosed patients with epilepsy in Finland: a nationwide register-based study. *Eur J Epidemiol* 28: 981–90, 2013
- Peterson CL, Piccenna L, Williams S et al.: Older people and knowledge of epilepsy: GPs can help. *Aust Fam Physician* 46: 132–136, 2017
- PPB. Preparing a health economic evaluation to be attached to the application for reimbursement status and wholesale price for a medicinal product. Application instructions, health economic evaluation 17.12.2019. Finnish Pharmaceutical Pricing Board
- Ring A, Jacoby A, Baker G et al.: What really matters? A mixed methods study of treatment preferences and priorities among people with epilepsy in the UK. *Epilepsy Behav* 95: 181–191, 2019
- Ross A, Stefan H, Schäuble B et al.: European survey of the level of satisfaction of patients and physicians in the management of epilepsy in general practice. *Epilepsy & Behaviour* 19: 36–42, 2010
- Saarni S, Härkänen T, Sintonen H et al.: The impact of 29 chronic conditions on health-related quality of life: a general population survey in Finland using 15D and EQ-5D. *Qual Life Res* 15: 1403–1414, 2006
- Selassie AW, Wilson DA, Martz GU, Smith GG, Wagner JL, Wannamaker BB. Epilepsy beyond seizure: A population-based study of comorbidities. *Epilepsy Res* 108: 305–315, 2014
- Sethi AK, Singh V, Chaurasia RN et al.: Study of Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice among Epilepsy Patients in North India. *J Neurosci Rural Pract* 11: 278–285, 2020
- Silvennoinen E, Hämeen-Anttila K, Jauhonen H-M, Jyrkkä J. Fimea Medicines Barometer 2017. Description of the data and data collection of population surveys. Serial Publication Fimea Develops, Assesses and Informs 12/2018. Finnish Medicines Agency Fimea, Helsinki, 2018
- Soini E: Biologisten lääkkeiden kustannusvaikuttavuus nivelpsoriaasin hoidossa. Helsinki: Suomalainen Lääkäriseura Duodecim, 2017 (accessed 27.1.2021). <https://www.kaypahoito.fi/nix02465>
- Soini E, Joutseno J, Sumelahti ML: Cost-Utility of First-Line Disease-Modifying Treatments for Relapsing-Remitting Multiple Sclerosis. *Clin Ther* 39: 537–557, 2017



Soini E, Martikainen J, Vanoli A: Cost-effectiveness and budget impact modelling of lacosamide in the treatment of partial-onset epilepsy in Finland. IV Neurologiapäivät Neuroscience Finland: P-11, 2009

Soini E, Väättäin S, Arvonen S: Predicted cost-benefit of Virtual Hospital 2.0 in terms of health care capacity freed: Towards potential economic efficiency with digitalization and customer-responsive secondary care services. Belfast, Northern Ireland: WHO International Healthy Cities Conference Oct 1-4, 2018

Suomen virallinen tilasto SVT: Väestörakenne [verkkójulkaisu]. ISSN=1797-5379. 2019. Helsinki: Tilastokeskus (accessed 27.1.2021). [http://www.stat.fi/til/vaerak/2019/vaerak\\_2019\\_2020-03-24\\_tau\\_002.fi.html](http://www.stat.fi/til/vaerak/2019/vaerak_2019_2020-03-24_tau_002.fi.html)

Sweileh WM, Ihbeshah MS, Jarar IS et al.: Self-reported medication adherence and treatment satisfaction in patients with epilepsy. *Epilepsy Behav* 21: 301-305, 2011

Teng T, Sareidaki DE, Chemaly N et al.: Physician and patient satisfaction with the switch to remote outpatient encounters in epilepsy clinics during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Seizure* 91: 60-65, 2021.

Väättäin S, Soini E, Peltola J, Charokopou M, Taiha M, Kälviäinen R. Economic Value of Adjunctive Brivaracetam Treatment Strategy for Focal Onset Seizures in Finland. *Adv Ther* 37: 477-500, 2020

---

Soini E, Lundström T, Taiha M, Mankinen P, Linden K: Epilepsy awareness and treatment satisfaction in Finland – An electronic survey for patients and close relation individuals. *Dosis* 38: 290-325, 2022

## Appendix 1. Close relation individual (CRI) questions from the epilepsy survey in Finnish

Note: The patient questionnaire asked first if the patient has an epilepsy diagnosis and if he or she has visited a clinician during the past two years. Patient questions did not include questions 3–5 listed below. Patient questions had similar answering options as the CRI questions below, but the question orientation was changed from “hän” (he/she) to “sinä” (you).

### 1. Onko läheiselläsi diagnosoitu epilepsia?

- Kyllä
- Ei

Epilepsiaa sairastavasta läheisestäsi käytetään muotoilua ”hän”.

### 2. Onko hän käynyt lääkärin vastaanotolla epilepsian vuoksi viimeisen kahden vuoden aikana?

- Kyllä
- Ei
- En tiedä

### 3. Suhteesi häneen?

- Avio- tai avopuoliso
- Lapsi
- Vanhempi
- Sisarus
- Muu sukulainen
- Ystävä

### 4. Asutko samassa taloudessa hänen kanssaan?

- Kyllä
- En

### 5. Kuinka hyvin tiedät hänen epilepsiaansa ja terveyteensä liittyvät asiat?

- Erittäin hyvin
- Jokseenkin hyvin
- Jokseenkin huonosti
- Erittäin huonosti

### 6. Minä vuonna hän on syntynyt?

Vuonna

### 7. Hän on

- Mies
- Nainen
- En halua kertoa

### 8. Onko hänellä diagnosoitu epilepsian lisäksi jokin seuraavista pitkäaikaissairauksista? Valitse kaikki sopivat.

- Kohonnut verenpaine
- Dyslipidemia (suurentuneet kolesteroliarvot)
- Sepelvaltimotauti
- Sydämen vajaatoiminta
- Aivohalvaus (tukos tai vuoto)
- Muu sydän- ja verisuonitauti
- Astma
- Keuhkohtaumatauti (COPD)
- Muu keuhkosairaus
- Haittaava allergia
- Diabetes
- Harmaakaihi (katarakta)
- Glaukooma (silmapainetauti)
- Silmänpohjan rappeuma
- Syöpä
- Onnettomuuden aiheuttama haitta
- Inkontinenssi (virtsa-karkailu)
- Heikentynyt kuulo
- Korvien soiminen (tinnitus)
- Migreeni
- Parkinsonin tauti
- Muu neurologinen sairaus
- Masennus (depressio)
- Ahdistuneisuushäiriö
- Mania (maanisuus)
- Psykoosi
- Alkoholismi
- Muu mielenterveyden ongelma
- Lonkan tai polven nivelkuluma
- Selkärangan ongelma, kuten kuluma
- Niskan ongelma, kuten kuluma
- Muu nivelkuluma
- Osteoporoosi
- Nivelreuma
- Muu tuki- ja liikuntaelinsairaus
- Tulehduksellinen suolistosairaus
- Muu ruoansulatuskanavan sairaus
- Psoriaasi
- Muu ihosairaus
- Jokin muu pitkäaikaissairaus
- Ei mitään edellä mainituista
- En tiedä
- En halua kertoa

### 9. Minä vuonna hänellä todettiin epilepsia? Mikäli et tiedä, jätä tyhjäksi.

Vuonna

**10. Ketkä osallistuvat hänen epilepsiansa lääkehoitoon? Valitse kaikki sopivat vaihtoehdot.**

- Neurologian erikoislääkäri
- Neurologiaan erikoistuva lääkäri
- Perusterveydenhuollon lääkäri
- Työterveyslääkäri
- Ei kukaan edellä mainituista
- En tiedä

**11. Kuinka kuvailisit yleisesti hänen epilepsiaansa?**

- On kohtaukseton tai kohtaukset ovat hyvin hallinnassa; pystyy toimimaan hyvin opinnoissa tai töissä.
- Kohtaukset ovat enimmäkseen hallinnassa; pystyy toimimaan kohtalaisen hyvin opinnoissa tai töissä useimpina päivinä.
- Kohtaukset eivät ole hallinnassa ja ne rajoittavat työssäkäyntiä tai opiskelua merkittävästi.
- En tiedä.

**12. Onko hänellä ollut resepti yhdelle tai useammalle säännöllisesti käytettävälle epilepsialäkkeelle viimeisen kahden vuoden aikana?**

- Kyllä
- Ei
- En tiedä

**13. Kuinka monta säännöllisesti otettavaa reseptilääkettä hänelle on määrätty tällä hetkellä hänen epilepsiansa hoitoon?**

- Ei yhtään säännöllisesti otettavaa lääkettä
- Yksi säännöllisesti otettava lääke
- Kaksi säännöllisesti otettavaa lääkettä
- Kolme säännöllisesti otettavaa lääkettä
- Neljä säännöllisesti otettavaa lääkettä tai enemmän
- En tiedä

**14. Kuinka suuren osan hänen epilepsiansa hoitoon määrättyistä säännöllisesti otettavista reseptilääkkeistä hän on ottanut viimeisen seitsemän päivän (yhden viikon) aikana?**

- Kaikki
- Suurimman osan
- Noin puolet
- Alle puolet
- Ei yhtään
- En tiedä

**15. Miksi hän ei ole ottanut kaikkia säännöllisesti käytettäviä reseptilääkkeitä, jotka hänelle on määrätty ottamaan epilepsiansa hoitoon? Valitse kaikki sopivat vaihtoehdot.**

- Haittavaikutukset häiritsevät elämää
- Kustannuksien takia
- Ei ole varma, että lääkitys todella toimii
- Unohti ottaa lääkkeitä
- Uskoo, että pienempikin lääkeannos voi hallita kohtauksia
- Lääkkeet loppuivat
- Epilepsia häiritsee opiskelua tai työssäoloa lääkityksestä huolimatta
- Ei koe tarvetta säännölliselle lääkitykselle
- Muu syy
- En tiedä

**16. Onko hänellä ollut resepti yhdelle tai useammalle tarvittaessa otettavalle epilepsialäkkeelle viimeisen kahden vuoden aikana?**

- Kyllä
- Ei
- En tiedä

**17. Kuinka monta tarvittaessa otettavaa reseptilääkettä hänelle on määrätty tällä hetkellä hänen epilepsiansa hoitoon?**

- Ei yhtään tarvittaessa otettavaa lääkettä
- Yksi tarvittaessa otettava lääke
- Kaksi tarvittaessa otettavaa lääkettä
- Kolme tarvittaessa otettavaa lääkettä
- Neljä tarvittaessa otettavaa lääkettä tai enemmän
- En tiedä

**18. Kuinka usein hän käyttää hänen epilepsiansa hoitoon määrättyjä tarvittaessa otettavia reseptilääkkeitä tällä hetkellä?**

- Useamman kerran päivässä
- Päivittäin
- Muutaman kerran viikossa
- Viikoittain
- Muutaman kerran kuukaudessa
- Kuukausittain
- Muutaman kerran vuodessa
- Kerran vuodessa
- Harvemmin
- Ei koskaan
- En tiedä

**19. Kuinka paljon koet hänen olevan mukana hänen epilepsiansa lääkettä koskeissa päätöksissä?**

- Häntä hoitava lääkäri tekee kaikki lääkehoitoon liittyvät päätökset.
- Hänellä on yleinen käsitys lääkehoitovaihtoehdoista ja on osallisena joissakin häntä koskeissa päätöksissä.
- Hän ymmärtää lääkehoitovaihtoehdot ja niiden vaikutukset, osallistuu päätöksiin.
- En tiedä.

**20. Kuinka paljon hän haluaa olla mukana hänen epilepsiansa lääkettä koskeissa päätöksissä?**

- Haluaa, että häntä hoitava lääkäri tekee tarvittavat lääkehoitopäätökset.
- Haluaa yleisen käsityksen lääkehoitovaihtoehdoista, jotta voi olla mukana päätöksissä.
- Haluaa ymmärtää lääkehoitovaihtoehdot ja niiden mahdolliset vaikutukset, jotta voi osallistua kaikkiin päätöksiin.
- En tiedä.

**21. Kuinka tyytyväinen hän on tällä hetkellä hänen epilepsiansa lääkehoitoon?**

- Erittäin tyytyväinen
- Jokseenkin tyytyväinen
- Jokseenkin tyytymätön
- Erittäin tyytymätön
- En tiedä

**22. Kuinka tyytyväinen hän on hänen epilepsiansa hoitavaan lääkäriin?**

- Erittäin tyytyväinen
- Jokseenkin tyytyväinen
- Jokseenkin tyytymätön
- Erittäin tyytymätön
- En tiedä

**23. Onko hänellä jatkuva hoitosuhde hänen epilepsiansa hoitavaan lääkäriin?**

- Kyllä, tapaa aina saman lääkärin käydessään vastaanotolla
- Kyllä, tapaa yleensä saman lääkärin käydessään vastaanotolla
- Ei, tapaa yleensä eri lääkärin käydessään vastaanotolla
- Ei, tapaa aina eri lääkärin käydessään vastaanotolla
- En tiedä

**24. Kuinka hyvä asia jatkuva hoitosuhde epilepsiaa hoitavan lääkärin kanssa hänen mielestään on?**

- Erittäin hyvä
- Jokseenkin hyvä
- Jokseenkin huono
- Erittäin huono
- En tiedä

**25. Kuinka tärkeitä hänelle ovat seuraavat tavoitteet hänen epilepsiansa lääkettä koskeissa päätöksissä?**

*Vastausvaihtoehdot:*

- 1 *Ei lainkaan tärkeää*
- 2 *Ei kovin tärkeää*
- 3 *Jokseenkin tärkeää*
- 4 *Erittäin tärkeää*
- 5 *En tiedä.*

- Kohtausten määrän vähentäminen
- Kohtausten voimakkuuden lievittäminen
- Tehokkaan annoksen saavuttamiseen kuluvan ajan lyhentäminen lääkettä aloitettaessa
- Epilepsialääkkeiden vaihtamisen minimointi haittavaikutusten vuoksi
- Hyvän hoitovasteen saavuttaminen ja siitä johtuva vähentynyt lääkkeiden vaihdon tarve
- Nykyisen lääkehoidon haittavaikutusten vähentäminen
- Päivittäisen toimintakyvyn säilyminen ilman, että lääkehoito häiritsee toimintakykyä
- Masennuksen välttäminen lääkkeestä johtuvana haittavaikutuksena
- Ahdistuksen, mukaan lukien pelko, hermostuneisuus tai huoli, välttäminen lääkkeestä johtuvana haittavaikutuksena
- Käytökseen liittyvien haittavaikutusten, kuten ärtyneisyyden ja aggressiivisuuden, välttäminen lääkkeestä johtuvana haittavaikutuksena
- Keskittymiskyvyn ja muistin heikentymisen välttäminen lääkkeestä johtuvana haittavaikutuksena
- Verikokeiden ottamisen välttäminen
- Osallistuminen opiskelu- tai työelämään
- Kotitöiden onnistuminen

**26. Kuinka tyytyväinen tai tyytymätön hän on tällä hetkellä hänen epilepsiansa lääkehoitoon seuraavien asioiden suhteen?**

*Vastausvaihtoehdot:*

- 1 *Erittäin tyytymätön*
- 2 *Jokseenkin tyytymätön*
- 3 *Jokseenkin tyytyväinen*
- 4 *Erittäin tyytyväinen*
- 5 *En tiedä.*

- Kohtausten määrän vähentäminen
- Kohtausten voimakkuuden lievittäminen
- Tehokkaan annoksen saavuttamiseen kuluvan ajan lyhentäminen lääkettä aloitettaessa
- Epilepsialääkkeiden vaihtamisen minimointi haittavaikutusten vuoksi
- Hyvän hoitovasteen saavuttaminen ja siitä johtuva vähentynyt lääkkeiden vaihdon tarve
- Nykyisen lääkehoidon haittavaikutusten vähentäminen
- Päivittäisen toimintakyvyn säilyminen ilman, että lääkehoito häiritsee toimintakykyä
- Masennuksen välttäminen lääkkeestä johtuvana haittavaikutuksena
- Ahdistuksen, mukaan lukien pelko, hermostuneisuus tai huoli, välttäminen lääkkeestä johtuvana haittavaikutuksena
- Käytökseen liittyvien haittavaikutusten, kuten ärtyneisyyden ja aggressiivisuuden, välttäminen lääkkeestä johtuvana haittavaikutuksena
- Keskittymiskyvyn ja muistin heikentymisen välttäminen lääkkeestä johtuvana haittavaikutuksena
- Verikokeiden ottamisen välttäminen
- Osallistuminen opiskelu- tai työelämään
- Kotitöiden onnistuminen

**27. Onko lääkäri maininnut, että hänen on vain opittava elämään epilepsialääkkeiden haittavaikutusten kanssa?**

- Kyllä
- Ei
- En tiedä

**28. Jos hänen lääkäriinsä ehdottaisi epilepsialääkitykseen muutosta, kuinka halukas hän olisi muuttamaan lääkitystä?**

- Erittäin halukas
- Jokseenkin halukas
- Ei kovin halukas
- Ei lainkaan halukas
- En tiedä

**29. Onko hän kokenut seuraavia hänen epilepsiansa lääkehoitoon mahdollisesti liittyviä haittavaikutuksia kahden viime vuoden aikana? Valitse kaikki ne, joita tiedät hänen kokeneen.**

- Painonnousu tai -lasku
- Käsien ja jalkojen kihelmöinti
- Pahoinvointi
- Ihottuma
- Päänsärky
- Keskittymisvaikeudet
- Huono muisti tai vaikeus muistaa sanoja
- Ahdistuneisuus tai muut siihen liittyvät mielialan muutokset mukaan lukien pelko, hermostuneisuus tai huoli
- Masennus
- Väsymys
- Unihäiriöt
- Huimaus
- Näkökyvyn muutokset
- Hiustenlähtö
- Lisääntymisterveysten tai seksuaalitoimintojen ongelmat
- Kasvojen tai ulkonäön muutokset
- Luuston terveyden ongelma
- Käyttäytymiseen liittyvät häiriöt, kuten aggressiivisuus ja ärtyneisyys
- Jokin muu haittavaikutus
- Ei ole kokenut haittavaikutuksia
- En tiedä

**30. Mitä seuraavista hänen epilepsiansa lääkehoitoon mahdollisesti liittyvistä haittavaikutuksista hän kokee tällä hetkellä? Valitse kaikki ne, joita tiedät hänen kokevan.**

- Painonnousu tai -lasku
- Käsien ja jalkojen kihelmöinti
- Pahoinvointi
- Ihottuma
- Päänsärky
- Keskittymisvaikeudet
- Huono muisti tai vaikeus muistaa sanoja
- Ahdistuneisuus tai muut siihen liittyvät mielialan muutokset mukaan lukien pelko, hermostuneisuus tai huoli
- Masennus
- Väsymys
- Unihäiriöt
- Huimaus
- Näkökyvyn muutokset
- Hiustenlähtö
- Lisääntymisterveysten tai seksuaalitoimintojen ongelmat
- Kasvojen tai ulkonäön muutokset
- Luuston terveyden ongelmat
- Käyttäytymiseen liittyvät häiriöt, kuten aggressiivisuus ja ärtyneisyys
- Jokin muu haittavaikutus
- Ei koe tällä hetkellä haittavaikutuksia
- En tiedä

**31. Kuinka paljon edellä valitsemasi haittavaikutukset vaivaavat häntä tällä hetkellä?**

*Vastausvaihtoehdot:*

- 1 *Ei lainkaan*
- 2 *Ei kovin paljon*
- 3 *Jonkin verran*
- 4 *Erittäin paljon*
- 5 *En tiedä.*

- Painonnousu tai -lasku
- Käsien ja jalkojen kihelmöinti
- Pahoinvointi
- Ihottuma
- Päänsärky
- Keskittymisvaikeudet
- Huono muisti tai vaikeus muistaa sanoja
- Ahdistuneisuus tai muut siihen liittyvät mielialan muutokset mukaan lukien pelko, hermostuneisuus tai huoli
- Masennus
- Väsymys
- Unihäiriöt
- Huimaus
- Näkökyvyn muutokset
- Hiustenlähtö
- Lisääntymisterveysten tai seksuaalitoimintojen ongelmat

- Kasvojen tai ulkonäön muutokset
- Luuston terveyden ongelmat
- Käyttäytymiseen liittyvät häiriöt, kuten aggressiivisuus ja ärtyneisyys
- Jokin muu haittavaikutus

**32. Kuinka paljon epilepsialääkkeistä mahdollisesti johtuvat haittavaikutukset vaikuttavat hänen seuraaviin elämäalueisiinsa?**

Vastausvaihtoehdot:

- 1 *Ei ollenkaan*
- 2 *Ei kovin paljon*
- 3 *Jonkin verran*
- 4 *Erittäin paljon*
- 5 *Ei sovellu*
- 6 *En tiedä.*

- Perhe- ja ystävyssuhteet
- Työ (työn tekeminen, työnhaku tai työpaikan säilyttäminen)
- Tunnetila
- Ajokyky
- Opiskelu
- Uni
- Vapaa-ajan toiminta ja urheilu
- Osallistuminen julkisiin tapahtumiin
- Yleinen elämänlaatu

**33. Millaista hänen epilepsiansa lääkehoito on?**

- Lääkehoito keskittyy ainoastaan kohtausten hallintaan.
- Lääkehoito keskittyy suurimmalta osalta kohtausten hallintaan.
- Lääkehoito keskittyy tasapuolisesti kohtausten hallintaan ja haittavaikutusten välttämiseen tai vähentämiseen.
- Lääkehoito keskittyy suurimmalta osalta haittavaikutuksien välttämiseen tai vähentämiseen.
- Lääkehoito keskittyy ainoastaan haittavaikutuksien välttämiseen tai vähentämiseen.
- En tiedä.

**34. Mitä hän kaipaisi epilepsiansa lääkehoitoon?**

- Parempaa kohtausten hallintaa
- Vähemmän haittavaikutuksia
- Sekä parempaa kohtausten hallintaa että vähemmän haittavaikutuksia
- Ei näe lääkehoidossa parantamisen varaa
- En tiedä

**35. Onko hän koskaan lopettanut epilepsiansa lääkehoitoa, koska se häiritsi hänen päivittäisiä toimintojaan, jotka ovat tärkeitä hänelle?**

- Kyllä
- Ei
- En tiedä

**36. Onko hänelle joskus jouduttu vaihtamaan epilepsialääkettä haittavaikutusten vuoksi?**

- Kyllä
- Ei
- En tiedä

**37. Kuinka paljon hänen epilepsiansa lääkeshoidossa on huomioitu hänen erityistarpeensa, elämäntapansa ja mieltymyksensä?**

- Erittäin paljon
- Jonkin verran
- Ei kovin paljon
- Ei lainkaan
- En tiedä

**38. Kuinka usein hän keskustelee lääkäriinsä kanssa seuraavista asioista?**

Vastausvaihtoehdot:

- 1 *Ei koskaan*
- 2 *Harvoin*
- 3 *Joskus*
- 4 *Usein*
- 5 *Aina*
- 6 *Ei sovellu*
- 7 *En tiedä.*

- Tarpeesta muuttaa hänen epilepsiansa lääkehoitoa
- Hänen kokonaisvaltaisesta terveydestään
- Uusista tai erilaisista epilepsian lääkehoitovaihtoehdoista
- Kuinka epilepsia vaikuttaa hänen päivittäiseen elämäänsä, mukaan lukien ihmissuhteet, työelämä, urheilu, vapaa-aika, harrastukset jne.
- Hänen psyykkisestä hyvinvoinnistaan
- Epilepsian lääkitykseen liittyvistä haittavaikutuksista
- Muusta hänen epilepsiansa hoitoon liittyvästä

**39. Kumpi normaalisti nostaa esille edellä mainittuja asioita, hän vai hänen lääkäriinsä?**

Vastausvaihtoehdot:

- 1 *Hän*
- 2 *Lääkäri*
- 3 *He molemmat tasapuolisesti*
- 4 *En tiedä.*

- Tarve muuttaa hänen epilepsiansa lääkehoitoa
- Hänen kokonaisvaltainen terveytensä
- Uudet tai erilaiset epilepsian lääkehoitovaihtoehdot
- Epilepsian vaikutus hänen päivittäiseen elämäänsä, mukaan lukien ihmissuhteet, työelämä, urheilu, vapaa-aika, harrastukset jne.
- Hänen psyykkinen hyvinvointinsa
- Epilepsian lääkitykseen liittyvät haittavaikutukset
- Muu hänen epilepsiansa hoitoon liittyvä

#### 40. Kuinka paljon hän on samaa tai eri mieltä seuraavien väittämien kanssa?

Vastausvaihtoehdot:

- 1 Täysin eri mieltä
- 2 Jokseenkin eri mieltä
- 3 Jokseenkin samaa mieltä
- 4 Täysin samaa mieltä
- 5 Ei koske häntä
- 6 En tiedä.

- Epilepsian lääkehoitoon ei ole paljon vaihtoehtoja
- Hänen on vain opittava elämään epilepsian lääkehoidon haittavaikutusten kanssa
- Hän on välillä haluton puhumaan lääkärin kanssa kokemistaan epilepsialääkkeiden haittavaikutuksista
- Hän kokee, että hän hallitsee hänen epilepsiansa hoitoa

#### 41. Valitse korkeintaan kolme yleisintä epilepsian lääkehoidon aloittamisen estettä, joista hän on keskustellut tai haluaisi keskustella lääkärinsä kanssa.

- Hinta
- Pitkä aloitusvaihe
- Kela-korvattavuuden puuttuminen
- Tiedon vähäisyys
- Vähäinen käyttökokemus
- Vähäinen teho
- Haittavaikutukset
- Turvallisuus
- Hänen asenteensa epilepsian lääkehoitoa kohtaan
- Muu este
- Ei ole kokenut estettä epilepsialääkehoidolle
- En tiedä

#### 42. Kuinka paljon hän tietää epilepsiasta sairautena?

- Erittäin paljon
- Jonkin verran
- Ei lainkaan
- En tiedä

#### 43. Kuinka paljon hän tietää saatavilla olevista epilepsian lääkehoidoista?

- Erittäin paljon
- Jonkin verran
- Ei lainkaan
- En tiedä

#### 44. Kuinka usein hän etsii tietoa epilepsiasta ja/tai erilaisista käytettävissä olevista lääkehoitovaihtoehdoista?

- Viikoittain
- Kuukausittain
- Harvemmin
- Ei koskaan
- En tiedä

#### 45. Tuntuuko hänestä, että hän tietää riittävästi epilepsiasta ja käytettävissä olevista lääkehoitovaihtoehdoista vai haluaisiko hän, että hän tietäisi enemmän?

- Hänellä on tarvittavat tiedot
- Hän toivoo, että hän tietäisi enemmän
- En tiedä

#### 46. Mitkä ovat hänen tärkeimmät tiedonlähteensä epilepsian lääkehoitovaihtoehtoihin liittyen? Valitse enintään viisi.

- Neurologian erikoislääkäri
- Neurologiaan erikoistuva lääkäri
- Perusterveydenhuollon lääkäri
- Työterveyslääkäri
- Muu lääkäri
- Muu terveydenhuoltohenkilöstö (sairaanhoitaja tms.)
- Apteekin henkilökunta
- Epilepsiaa käsittelevät internetsivustot tai blogit
- Lääkeyhtiöiden internetsivustot
- Epilepsialiitto ja epilepsiyhdistykset
- Epilepsiaa käsittelevät uutiskirjeet tai aikakauslehdet
- Yleiset aikakauslehdet
- Sanomalehdet
- Epilepsian tukiryhmät
- Televisio
- Perhe tai ystävät
- Ei mikään edellä mainituista
- En tiedä

**Appendix 2. Associations between medication satisfaction and its potential predictors**  
**First, potential predictor variables' associations with the outcome (very satisfied with ASM or not) were explored univariately with the common chi2 or Spearman test and their impact was screened. The impact on the probability of not being very satisfied and the p-value were reported (List 1). P-value thresholds for exploration were: 0.100 indicative and 0.050 statistically significant. Variables with less than 300 valid answers were excluded for robustness.**

**List 1. The following were univariately associated with not being very satisfied with ASM (impact on the probability, p-value):**

- CRI responder (18%,  $p < 0.001$ )
- Age (11% younger,  $p = 0.033$ )
- No hypertension comorbidity (10%,  $p = 0.058$ )
- No physician specialising in neurology (12%,  $p = 0.015$ )
- No primary or occupational health physician (9%,  $p = 0.071$ )
- Not very satisfied with the physician (39%,  $p < 0.001$ )
- Number of continuous medications (17% per medication,  $p < 0.001$ )
- Seizures not well controlled (27%,  $p < 0.001$ )
- Number of AEs during the last two years (22% per AE,  $p < 0.001$ )
- Has a general understanding; takes part in some medication decisions (vs. full understanding; takes part: 13%,  $p = 0.028$ )
- Wants to participate in decision-making (19%,  $p < 0.001$ )
- Was told by the physician that he or she needs to learn to live with AEs (28%,  $p < 0.001$ )
- Better control of seizures or AEs needed (41%,  $p < 0.001$ )
- Individual needs, lifestyle, and preferences not considered very much (15%,  $p = 0.006$ )
- Willing to change medication (30%,  $p < 0.001$ )
- Obstacles for medication initiation that the patient has or would like to discuss with the physician (24%,  $p < 0.001$ )
- Searches for information related to epilepsy or its medication (22%,  $p < 0.001$ )
- Wishes for more information related to epilepsy or its medication (24%,  $p < 0.001$ ).

**List 2. The following variables were not univariately associated with the outcome:**

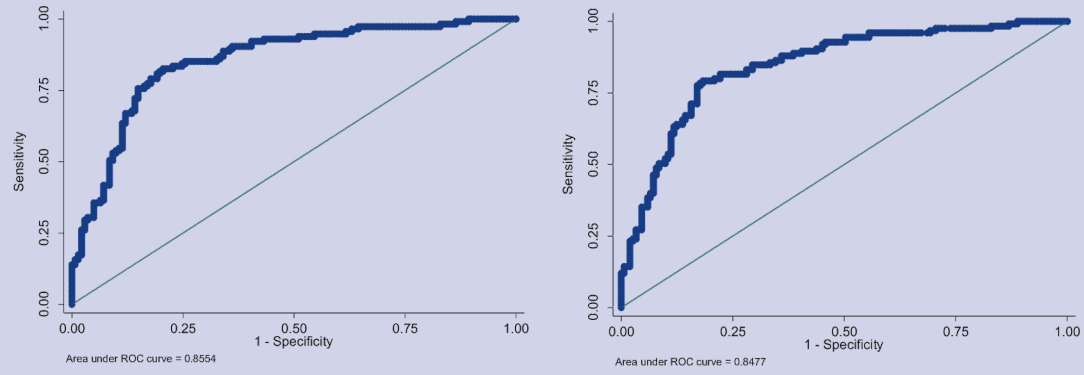
- Setting for survey delivery (SMS to loyalty program patients or paper forms with a link to the survey delivered by the community pharmacy,  $p = 0.365$ )
- Gender ( $p = 0.552$ )
- Time from epilepsy diagnosis ( $p = 0.173$ )
- Another comorbidity than hypertension
- Specialist in neurology ( $p = 0.215$ )
- Adherence (less than 100%,  $p = 0.990$ )
- Treating physician makes all decisions ( $p = 0.981$ )
- Medication focuses on seizure control, AE control, or both ( $p = 0.438$ )
- Had stopped medication because of its disturbing effects on important daily activities ( $p = 0.239$ )
- Medication changed due to AEs ( $p = 0.140$ )
- Lack of information regarding epilepsy ( $p = 0.609$ )
- Lack of information regarding epilepsy medications ( $p = 0.992$ )
- Specific sources of information or their amount ( $p = 0.153$ ).

Second, a full logistic regression (logit) model predicting the outcome (very satisfied or not with the ASM) was built using the variables in the list 1 (**Table A1**).

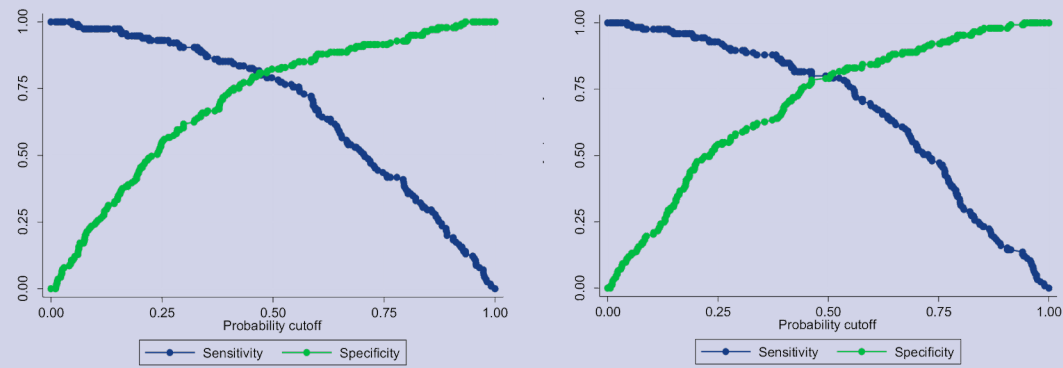
Third, a parsimonious logit model was established based on hierarchical iterative backwise elimination of insignificant predictors. The elimination was done until the model's performance started to deteriorate, which resulted in the highest possible number of observations conditional on the predictors while improving the information criteria and keeping the predictive performance high (actually, the predictive performance of the parsimonious model can be up to 5 percentage points [i.e., 14 patients] higher compared to the full model in terms of the bigger population used in the parsimonious model). (**Table A1**)

55% of the responders in the logit models were less than very satisfied with the ASM, which indicated higher censoring in the data among those reporting very satisfied with the ASM. The parsimonious logit model was balanced and had an acceptable predictive accuracy of approximately 80% with approximately 30% value gained from modelling and high area under the curve value. (**Table A1, Figures A1-A2**)





**Figure A1.** Area under the curve for full (left side) and parsimonious (right side) logit models.



**Figure A2.** Sensitivity and specificity for full (left side) and parsimonious (right side) logit models.

**Table A1. Full and parsimonious logistic regression (logit) models predicting the outcome (less than very satisfied with the medication).**

Model Parameter	Full logit (n = 256)			Parsimonious logit (n = 278)		
	OR	SE	p-value	OR	SE	p-value
Close relation individual (CRI) responder	1.177	1.512	0.899			
Age, in years	0.974	0.011	0.015*	0.968	0.009	0.000***
Hypertension comorbidity	0.950	0.445	0.913			
Physician specialising in neurology	0.830	0.343	0.652			
Primary or occupational health physician	0.661	0.271	0.315			
Not very satisfied with the physician	4.771	1.792	0.000***	4.560	1.520	0.000***
Continuous medications, number	0.857	0.166	0.424	0.789	0.138	0.175
Seizures not well controlled	3.102	1.308	0.007**	2.601	0.998	0.013*
Number of AEs during the last two years	0.905	0.052	0.085			
Understands medication options; takes part in decisions	1.000			1.000		
- Has a general understanding; takes part in some medication decisions	0.531	0.219	0.125	0.474	0.166	0.034*
- Treating physician makes all decisions	1.789	1.609	0.331	1.925	1.016	0.215
Does not want to participate in decision-making	0.364	0.225	0.103	0.341	0.199	0.065
Was told by the physician that they need to learn to live with AEs	1.942	0.649	0.047*	2.105	0.657	0.017*
Better control of seizures or AEs needed	3.099	1.170	0.003**	2.567	0.854	0.005**
Individual needs, lifestyle, and preferences considered very much	0.445	0.193	0.062	0.456	0.174	0.040*
Willing to change medication	2.702	1.009	0.008**	3.321	1.147	0.001***
No obstacles for medication initiation that the patient has or would like to discuss with the physician	0.818	0.301	0.584			
Does not search for information related to epilepsy or its medication	0.452	0.205	0.081	0.404	0.179	0.041*
Wishes for more information related to epilepsy or its medication	1.472	0.543	0.295			
<b>Model's performance</b> Estimation	Wald chi2 61.46	LL -121.43	p-value 0.000***	Wald chi2 65.43	LL -134.42	p-value 0.000***
<b>Model's performance</b> Fit	LL -121.43	AIC 280.86	BIC 348.22	LL -134.42	AIC 292.85	BIC 336.38
<b>Prediction</b> Outcome (%)	Sensitivity 78.26	Specificity 82.27	Correct 80.47 <sup>^</sup>	Sensitivity 79.20	Specificity 79.08	Correct 79.14
<b>Value of modelling</b> Outcome (%)	AUC 85.54	Default 55.08	Increment 30.46 <sup>^^</sup>	AUC 84.77	Default 55.04	Increment 29.73

OR = odds ratio (relative odds of the occurrence of not very satisfied with medication, given exposure to the parameter);  
SE = standard error;  
AE = adverse event;  
LL = log likelihood;  
AIC = Akaike information criteria;  
BIC = Bayesian information criteria;  
AUC = area under the curve.  
\* p<0.050.  
\*\* p<0.010.  
\*\*\* p<0.001.  
<sup>^</sup> Of note, with the N of the parsimonious model (278), the correct predictions of the full model are 74.10% due to lack of data, and <sup>^^</sup> the increment decreases to 24.09%. Consequently, the correct predictions of the parsimonious model can be 5 percentage points (14 patients) higher in comparison to the full model.