Epilepsy In Africa
The Brain Storms Village
“Epilepsy in our World”
by Steven Schachter & Lisa Andermann

• People with Epilepsy—21 different countries
• Global village: world events, technology & advances in Medical science.
• Daily concerns: very similar yet worlds apart
Focus of the book

• How people cope with Seizures
• Impact of Epilepsy on their lives/relationships
• Variety of terms to describe Seizures
• Attacks, crises, fits, breakouts, trembling, convulsions & insults
Recurring Themes

- Search for answers to their Epilepsy
- Importance of family & friends
- Isolation, fear
- Rejection, Stigmatization
- Shame, self-blame
- Alternative therapies
- Need for Public Education
- Faith & Hope for the future
The International League against Epilepsy (ILAE)

• International Congress of Medicine held in 1909 in Budapest – decision to start a worldwide organization: ILAE

• Goal of ILAE: with the cooperation of all countries, to make the Epilepsy problem the object of special study, to make practical use of the Result of such studies. By papers, demonstrations & personal exchange of ideas knowledge of the disease may be advanced, its deleterious effect diminished
ILAE-IBE-WHO

• **WWI & WW2** interrupted ILAE activities
• **Regrouped in 1933**: Social care of people with Epilepsy & Scientific research in Epilepsy
• **International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE)**: 1961 a group within ILAE
• **World Health Organization (WHO)**: In 1971 the ILAE was accepted by WHO as a nongovernmental organization to support people with Epilepsy
Collaborative work for Epilepsy

- **ILAE**: professional arm
- **IBE**: public arm
- **WHO**: political arm
- **GCAE**: Global Campaign against Epilepsy: launched in Geneva on June 19, 1997
- **ILAE/IBE/WHO/GCAE**: improvement of diagnosis, treatment, prevention, & social acceptability of the disorder
Africa Declaration on Epilepsy

• A conference on “Epilepsy: A Healthcare Priority in Africa” held in Dakar, Senegal, Africa on May 5-6, 2000

• Epilepsy is the most common serious chronic brain disorder, irrespective of race, religion, sex, age, or socioeconomic status, & is estimated to affect at least 50 million people worldwide & 10 million people in Africa alone.
Cameroon, W Africa
Epilepsy in Cameroon

- Believed to be caused by ill will, supernatural forces and witchcraft
- Beliefs lead to high levels of stigmatism, incrimination & discrimination
- Implication socially: may be hidden away by their family, most do not receive education or work in addition to immense human tragedy
- Devastating social & economic problem
Patient seen at Ngoundere
Cameroon: Medical Experts Investigate Epilepsy Epidemic

• Epilepsy becoming apparent epidemic in Momo Division, Northwest Province
• 40% of their adult population have Epilepsy
• Early childhood onset seizure disorder lasts into adulthood, often life long
• The cause of Epilepsy in this area is from the parasitic infection: Neuro-cysticercosis caused by taenia solium. Affects man & pigs.
Neuro-cysticercosis

- The most common parasitic infection of the brain & a leading cause of Epilepsy in the developing world, especially Latin America, India, Africa & China.

- **Cysticercosis** is a parasitic infection, that results from ingestion of eggs from the adult tapeworm.

- When **cysticercosis** involves the central nervous system it is call **Neuro-cysticercosis**.

- Higher % of Neurocysticercosis in area where pigs are raised as a food source.
International Bureau for Epilepsy: Project in Cameroon

• **IBE**: Committed to finding new & innovative solutions to the problems impacting people with Epilepsy & their families

• **Cameroon Association against Epilepsy (ACCE)** - Tomoto Growing Project

• **People with Epilepsy**: the living dead

• **Community Plots**: develop self sufficiency

• **Combat**: Misguided beliefs
Treating Epilepsy

• **Phenobarbital Drug** - most used medication

• **Antiparasitic drugs**: Albendazole & Praziquantel to treat Neurocysticercosis

• **Educational** sessions

• We must **combat misguided beliefs**
Education is so Important
You can never have too much Education
The Cameroonians are interested in Learning!
Trying to Prevent Burns
Getting the Patient's history
The Team!
Questions??