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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The yield of continuous EEG monitoring in the intensive care unit at a tertiary care hospital in Saudi Arabia: A retrospective study [version 1; peer review: 1 approved, 1 approved with reservations, 1 not approved]

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Abstract

Background: The practice of continuous EEG monitoring (CEEG) in the intensive care unit (ICU) has been spreading over the past decade. Building an effective ICU CEEG program with sufficient quality demands adequate EEG equipment and significant human resources. While this is available in large tertiary care centers where the practice of CEEG has developed, it may not be available in developing healthcare systems. This study sought to provide data generated from a CEEG program in the adult ICU at a tertiary healthcare center in Saudi Arabia, shedding light on the real-life utility of CEEG in a developing healthcare system.

Methods: This is a retrospective review of CEEG findings, along with mortality and duration of hospitalization of patients who had CEEG during a 12-month period at the adult ICU at the King Abdulaziz University Hospital (KAUH) in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Results: A total of 202 CEEG records were identified. A total of 52 patients had non-convulsive seizures (NCS); 10 clearly fulfilled criteria for non-convulsive status epilepticus. There were 120 patients that had clinical seizures upon presentation. Among them, 36 (30%) had NCS on EEG. The proportion of patients who were deceased at 60 days was higher in patients who had NCS (42%) than those who didn't (26%, χ^2 (2, n=200)= 4.4, p=0.03). The duration of hospital stay was longer for those who had periodic or rhythmic CEEG patterns (χ^2 (2, n=200)= 7.6, p=0.02) but there was no significant relationship with mortality at 60 days.

Conclusion: This study demonstrates a real-world experience from a tertiary care center in Saudi Arabia, a developing healthcare system. Findings are consistent with prior experience with ICU CEEG, demonstrating that finding ictal, rhythmic or periodic patterns is

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Approval Status

	1	2	3
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- Elizabeth E Gerard**, Northwestern University
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Any reports and responses or comments on the article can be found at the end of the article.

associated with morbidity and mortality. Further studies are needed to demonstrate how the practice of CEEG may alter patient outcomes.

Keywords

Neurocritical care, EEG, non-convulsive seizures, status epilepticus, Saudi Arabia

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Author roles: Tayeb HO: Conceptualization, Formal Analysis, Methodology, Writing – Original Draft Preparation, Writing – Review & Editing

Competing interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

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Introduction

Continuous electroencephalography (CEEG), the practice of continuously recording an electroencephalogram and a time-synchronized video of the patient, is commonly utilized to monitor critically ill patients with acute brain injury or altered mental status¹. CEEG is instrumental in the diagnosis and management of nonconvulsive seizures (NCS) and status epilepticus, detection of cerebral ischemia, prognostication of outcomes after cardiorespiratory arrest, and evaluation of abnormal movements and altered mental status¹. The practice of CEEG monitoring of critically ill patients in the intensive care unit (ICU) has been spreading over the past decade, particularly in Europe and North America^{1,2}. Building an effective ICU CEEG program with sufficient quality demands not only adequate EEG equipment but also significant human resources². This includes trained electroencephalographers and technologists who have enough time to devote to reviewing the large amounts of EEG data that are generated through continuous monitoring². While this is available in large tertiary care centers where the practice of CEEG has developed, it may not be available in developing healthcare systems. Most of the published CEEG data also come from these advanced centers in North America and Europe.

This study sought to provide data generated from a CEEG program in the adult ICU at a tertiary healthcare center in Saudi Arabia, aiming to shed light on the real-life utility of CEEG in a developing healthcare system outside North America and Europe.

Methods

Data gathering

This is a retrospective review of ICU CEEG findings, as well as mortality status and duration of hospitalization of all patients who underwent CEEG monitoring during a 12-month period from September 2016 to August 2017 at the adult ICU at the King Abdulaziz University Hospital (KAUH) in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. This is an academic, tertiary-care, 600-bed hospital. Its adult ICU is comprised of 30 beds and is divided into medical and surgical divisions. CEEGs are requested by ICU physician or neurologists according to the clinical needs. An EEG technologist is available during the day time to set up ICU CEEGs. EEG leads are placed using the 10–20 international system of lead placement. CEEGs are digitally recorded, including synchronized video recording of the patient. The duration of CEEG monitoring is decided by the neurology consultation or ICU physicians. Studies whose duration was less than 2 hours were not included in the study as they were considered extended but not long-term studies. An epileptologist with fellowship training in CEEG interpretation reviewed the records on daily basis and reported them using the American Clinical Neurophysiology Society (ACNS) ICU EEG consortium proposed nomenclature for ICU EEG reporting, and the Salzburg criteria for non-convulsive status epilepticus³. Management decisions were made by the physicians in the ICU and neurology services.

Data analysis

Reports of CEEGs performed in the adult ICU during the study period were retrieved from the hospital's electronic medical records (EMR). The author extracted key data from the reports,

including background characteristics, the presence of rhythmic and periodic patterns or NCS. The author retrieved relevant demographic and clinical patient data from the hospital's EMR, including diagnoses, ICU and hospital stay, and mortality status at 60 days. Frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviation, and Chi square were performed using the IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, version 20.0.

Ethical approval

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of KAUH as a retrospective study of anonymized clinical data with waiver of additional patient consent.

Results

A total of 202 CEEG records fulfilling the criteria were identified; complete, raw figures are available as *Underlying data*⁴. There were 116 female patients. The mean age was 53 (standard deviation=21). The duration of CEEG recording varied, with 48 (24%) recorded for 2–6 hours and 154 (76%) recorded for 6–24 hours. **Table 1** shows the frequency of clinical diagnoses of our patients. The most common diagnostic categories were cerebrovascular disease and epilepsy. **Table 2** shows the frequency of CEEG findings. Among the 52 patients that had NCS on CEEG, 10 patients clearly fulfilled criteria for non-convulsive status epilepticus. There were 120 patients that had clinical seizures upon presentation prior to CEEG monitoring. Among them, 36 (30%) had NCS on EEG. The proportion of patients who were deceased at 60 days was significantly higher in patients who had NCS (42%) than those who didn't (27%, χ^2 (2, n=200)= 4.4, p=0.03) (**Table 3**). There was no significant difference in the duration of hospital stay between those who had seizures and those who didn't (p=0.2) (**Table 3**). The duration of hospital stay was longer for those who had periodic or rhythmic CEEG patterns (χ^2 (2, n=200)= 7.6, p=0.02) but there was no significant relationship with mortality at 60 days (**Table 3**).

Discussion

The practice of using CEEG in the ICU has developed rapidly over the past decade, particularly in North America and Europe^{1,5}. This study is one of the first to report the experience of using ICU CEEG in Saudi Arabia, a country with a rapidly developing

Table 1. Frequencies and percentages of relevant clinical diagnoses in the study sample.

Diagnosis	n (%)
Cerebrovascular disease	53 (26%)
Epilepsy	50 (25%)
Sepsis/Metabolic	40 (20%)
Brain tumor	8 (4%)
CNS infections	24 (12%)
Post arrest	10 (5%)
Traumatic brain injury	6 (3%)

Table 2. Frequencies and percentages of non-convulsive seizures (NCS), generalized periodic discharges (GPD), lateralized periodic discharges (LPD), GRDA (generalized rhythmic delta activity), and LRDA (lateralized rhythmic delta activity) in the study sample.

Variable	n (%)
NCS	52 (26%)
GPD	22 (11%)
LPD	20 (10%)
GRDA	22 (11%)
LRDA	14 (7%)

Table 3. Cross-tabulation of mortality and duration of hospital stay in relation to the presence of seizures and periodic or rhythmic patterns on CEEG.

Variable		Mortality	Hospital Stay		
		Death within 60 days	<1 week	1 week-1 month	>1 month
EEG Seizures	No	40 (27%)	44 (30%)	60 (40%)	44 (30%)
	Yes	22 (42%)*	12 (23%)	20 (39%)	20 (39%)
Periodic or rhythmic patterns	No	16 (25%)	26 (40%)	20 (31%)	18 (28%)
	Yes	46 (33%)	30 (22%)	60 (44%)	46 (34%)*

*p<0.05.

healthcare system that faces economic constraints. The data are consistent with prior knowledge and experience from other countries that CEEG is effective in detecting NCS and other likely harmful subclinical EEG patterns on the ictal-interictal continuum^{5,6}. This study also shows a significant association between NCS and mortality. In addition, having periodic or rhythmic patterns was significantly associated with longer hospital stays.

Prior studies have not definitively proven that utilizing CEEG leads to better outcomes^{2,5}. This, coupled with the significant resources required to effectively run an ICU CEEG program², may lead decision makers in healthcare systems to hesitate to support the development of CEEG practices. This study presents local data that demonstrate the need for CEEG. The data also raises questions whether CEEG is being utilized optimally. For example, few patients with brain tumors had CEEG, even though this is a patient population at risk of NCS. This suggests a need for a protocol for CEEG in the ICU, with focus on indications, required duration of monitoring, and management of NCS.

This study is a retrospective analysis with limitations. Data extracted from the EMR did not allow clarity with regards to the mental status of patients, use of sedatives, and other management decisions. Physicians did not follow a clear protocol when deciding the duration of the CEEG study. Longer studies may

lead to higher detection rates of relevant CEEG patterns. The number of cases in some diagnostic categories was not high enough to permit subgroup analyses. The clinical setting is that of a developing program with limited resources and must be interpreted in this context. Further studies from developing healthcare systems like Saudi Arabia's are needed to illuminate how the practice of CEEG monitoring may be integrated in the region.

Data availability

Open Science Framework: The yield of continuous EEG monitoring in the ICU at a tertiary care hospital in Saudi Arabia: A retrospective study. <https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/Q56J3>⁴.

This project contains all raw de-identified data associated with this study.

Data are available under the terms of the [Creative Commons Zero "No rights reserved" data waiver](#) (CC0 1.0 Public domain dedication).

Grant information

The author(s) declared that no grants were involved in supporting this work.

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[PubMed Abstract](#) | [Publisher Full Text](#) | [Free Full Text](#)
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Reviewer Report 18 September 2019

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Yara Mikhaeil-Demo

University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, USA

Elizabeth E Gerard

Department of Neurology, Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University (NU), Chicago, IL, 60611, USA

This paper describes a one-year experience using continuous EEG monitoring in a developing healthcare system. The authors experience with a growing cEEG program is a valuable addition to the literature. We have some comments and questions to better understand the results described:

Methods:

1. What were the inclusions and exclusions criteria? Was EEG duration less than two hours the only exclusion criteria?
2. How frequently were studies reviewed and results communicated to treating team? It would be helpful to know the timing of when the seizure occurred on EEG and the identification of these findings on EEG and communication with the treating physician.
3. When discussing mortality and morbidity, it would be helpful to adjust for comorbid conditions and severity of underlying illness.
4. In the statistical analysis were p values adjusted for multiple comparisons?

Results:

1. The author indicates a total of 202 cEEG records were identified. Are these for 202 unique patients? Did any patients have more than one cEEG study during this time? If so, were the subsequent studies excluded if the patients had more than one cEEG study during the one-year period?
2. How were the clinical diagnoses defined? For example, was "epilepsy" used only if the patient had a prior diagnosis of epilepsy, or was it also used for new-onset seizures?

Subcategorization of “cerebrovascular disease” would also be helpful. (Based on prior studies intracranial hemorrhage is much more likely to be associated with seizures than ischemic stroke.)

3. For Table 2, did any patients have more than one of the periodic patterns? Did patients have NCS and periodic patterns? Why is NCSE not listed in the table?
4. It would be interesting to look at the diagnoses associated with NCS, NCSE and periodic patterns.
5. In addition to describing the primary diagnosis of the patients it would be helpful to know why they were connected to cEEG. What were the indications for EEG monitoring and frequency for each indication? It would be helpful to describe a table of indication for EEG monitoring and percentage for each reason (example, clinical seizure, altered mental status, abnormal movements, etc).

Discussion:

1. The author states: “The data are consistent with prior knowledge and experience from other countries that CEEG is effective in detecting NCS and other likely harmful subclinical EEG patterns on the ictal-interictal continuum.” This paper does not define nor discuss the ictal-interictal continuum.
2. The discussion should compare the findings at the current center to prior publications on the yield of CEEG.
3. Without adjusting for underlying diagnosis and comorbidities, it is difficult to claim that there is “a significant association between NCS and mortality.”
4. It would be helpful to provide a more detailed discussion as to why the following finding was noted “periodic or rhythmic patterns was significantly associated with longer hospital stays.”
5. In the method section, the author states: “The duration of CEEG monitoring is decided by the neurology consultation or ICU physicians.” It appears that the longest duration for a study was 24 hours; however, as mentioned 52 patients had nonconvulsive seizures, with 10 patients fulfilling the criteria for non-convulsive status epilepticus. How were these patients monitored for response to treatment? Were NCS and NCSE successfully treated by the time of disconnect?
6. Throughout the article the authors refer to the resource requirement for CEEG monitoring. It would be interesting to know if and how resource limitations affected monitoring. What was the time from request to connection? Is there any reason to suspect this affected outcomes?

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

We confirm that we have read this submission and believe that we have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard, however we have

significant reservations, as outlined above.

Reviewer Report 23 July 2019

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Robert C. Tasker

Department of Neurology, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA, USA

The author has described a practice of continuous EEG monitoring in an intensive care unit in a University Hospital in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

I have a number of comments that will help readers better understand what these data mean, and how they might reflect on the implications for ICU practice.

Method (page 3)

1. In the first paragraph (line 8) the author describes "CEEG are requested by ICU physician or neurologists according to the clinical needs". In order to understand the significance of some of the analyses provided, it would be helpful to know what were the inclusion criteria, or the 'standard operating procedure' for the ICU. For example, were all patients comatose, and the clinician was unable to assess a clinical response?
2. In the first paragraph (lines 13-15) the authors describes "The duration of CEEG monitoring is decided by the neurology consultation or ICU physicians":
 - In order to understand the significance of some of the analyses later in the manuscript, it would be helpful to know when CEEG was started and finished in relation to admission and discharge/death.
 - It would also be helpful to know the timing of when NCS occurred.
3. Since this population has been gathered from ICU admissions, it would be helpful to have some description of ICU severity-of-illness, according to the risk-adjustment score used by the unit. The examination of any illness feature that might be associated with death needs to be adjusted for severity of illness. There were 62 observed deaths in 200 cases - what was the expected number of deaths from the admission data?

Results (pages 3 and 4)

1. The presentation of findings in the Results section and the Abstract is a little confusing:
 - The author has a starting population of 202 patients undergoing CEEG monitoring. Then, the denominators being used in the data summaries are n=120, and n=200. I think that a flow chart would help here.
2. Table 2 can be summarized as text, which will make room for a flow-diagram and better review of the data presented in Table 3.

3. Table 3 needs some attention to data accuracy. For example, in Row 2 (Hospital stay data) the percentages add up to 101%, which is just a rounding error. In Row 3 (Hospital stay data) the percentages add up to 99%.
4. Yes, the author has found some associations with death, and length of stay, but does the information gained from CEEG have the potential to help with decision making? For example, if we imagined that CEEG was a 'diagnostic test', then:
- The pre-CEEG probability of death in this population was 31%. The finding of EEG-seizures could change your pre-test to a post-test probability of death of 39%. I don't think that physicians would find this a helpful piece of information. That is, it is not about death, rather it is something we should use to identify a need for treatment, for example.
 - Similarly, the pre-CEEG probability of hospital stay >1 month was 32%. The finding of periodic or rhythmic patterns could change the pre-test to post-test probability of hospital stay >1 month to 34%. Again, I don't think that physicians would find this a helpful piece of information.
 - Obviously, both of these points would need to be tested and validated in a prospective study (as well as knowing details of when these CEEG features were found), but it may lead to a change in emphasis in the first paragraph of the Discussion.

Discussion (pages 3 and 4)

Based on the above results, one could conclude that identifying EEG seizures on CEEG does not provide a significant 'quantum' in prognostic evidence. Similarly, identifying periodic or rhythmic patterns on CEEG does not provide a significant 'quantum' in identifying cases that will be likely be in-hospital >1 month.

I am wondering whether the focus should be on 'what are we doing the CEEG': surely it is to identify something that we can/should treat; and, to identify something that will help us determine that we no longer need to do CEEG.

Is the work clearly and accurately presented and does it cite the current literature?

Yes

Is the study design appropriate and is the work technically sound?

Partly

Are sufficient details of methods and analysis provided to allow replication by others?

No

If applicable, is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?

No

Are all the source data underlying the results available to ensure full reproducibility?

Partly

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the results?

Partly

Competing Interests: Researcher in the 'Pediatric Status Epilepticus Research Group' (PSERG); Journal reviewer; Senior Editor

Reviewer Expertise: Pediatric Neurocritical Care; Pediatric ICU

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to state that I do not consider it to be of an acceptable scientific standard, for reasons outlined above.

Author Response 25 Aug 2019

Haythum Tayeb, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Dear Dr. Tasker,

Thank you very much for your time and detailed review of my manuscript entitled: "The yield of continuous EEG monitoring in the intensive care unit at a tertiary care hospital in Saudi Arabia: A retrospective study". I value your insights. I have submitted a new version of this manuscript that took into consideration all of your comments and followed your suggestions as well as the other peer review I received. I respond to your comments below as well:

1. it would be helpful to know what were the inclusion criteria, or the 'standard operating procedure' for the ICU.

I added this statement in the Data Gathering section of the new version of the article to clarify the standard practice of the physicians when it comes to ordering, starting and stopping CEEG: "ICU physicians or neurologists request CEEG to search for NCS or patterns on the ictal-interictal continuum when critically ill patients have a disturbance in the level of consciousness that is unexplained by apparent underlying neurological or medical conditions. CEEG is initiated and stopped based on the clinical judgment of the treating teams. Generally, physicians aim to continue monitoring for 24 hours in patients with altered mental status but may allow discontinuation of CEEG for clinical or practical constraints (e.g. EEG machine availability or the need to relocate the patients)."

In this developing program, there is no hospital protocol with regards to patient selection, CEEG initiation or termination. This is entirely left to the discretion of the treating physicians and is typically reached through discussion and consultation between neurology and ICU. Generally, all patients with unexplained altered mental status were included. It was difficult to ascertain from the EMR documentation how the mental status evolved during the time of the CEEG, unfortunately. This is a limitation I state in the Discussion section.

2. In order to understand the significance of some of the analyses later in the manuscript, it would be helpful to know when CEEG was started and finished in relation to admission and discharge/death. It would also be helpful to know the timing of when NCS occurred. It was difficult to determine with consistency retrospectively from EMR how the duration of monitoring was decided and when the seizures occurred relative to the outcomes of

interest. I agree that this is a limitation and would be best addressed in a prospective study. I added this to the new version of the article in the discussion section: "Retrospective EMR data did not contain accurate information with regards to the extent and evolution of mental status changes relative to the timing of the CEEG, use and titration of sedatives, and other management decisions. It was difficult to ascertain the timing of EEG initiation in relation to these dynamic variables of interest. Physicians did not follow a clear protocol when deciding the duration of the CEEG study."

3. Since this population has been gathered from ICU admissions, it would be helpful to have some description of ICU severity-of-illness, according to the risk-adjustment score used by the unit. The examination of any illness feature that might be associated with death needs to be adjusted for severity of illness. There were 62 observed deaths in 200 cases - what was the expected number of deaths from the admission data?

Thank you for pointing this out. I added this to the methods section: "The average APACHE II (Acute Physiology and Chronic Health Evaluation II) score of medical patients admitted to the ICU ranges between 10-30 on average. The scores are routinely calculated but not recorded in the electronic medical records (EMR)." This was a limitation of the study and we could not remedy this by calculating scores retrospectively.

4. The author has a starting population of 202 patients undergoing CEEG monitoring. Then, the denominators being used in the data summaries are $n=120$, and $n=200$. I think that a flow chart would help here.

I added a flow chart. Thank you for suggesting it. $n=120$ is the number of patients who had clinical seizures prior to CEEG initiation. This is a group of interest since data have previously shown a ~30% risk of NCS. We replicated this. I removed $n=200$ from the prior reporting of the Chi-square to avoid ambiguity. Thank you.

5. Table 2 can be summarized as text, which will make room for a flow-diagram and better review of the data presented in Table 3.

Done. I expanded table 1 (formerly table 3) by adding row and column percentages.

6. Table 3 needs some attention to data accuracy.

Thank you for pointing this out. I scrutinized the data and ensured accuracy. I fixed several coding errors that altered the proportions slightly without altering the overall outlook of the results as well.

7. Does the information gained from CEEG have the potential to help with decision making?

Thank you very much for highlighting this issue. To address it, I reported the "pre-test" proportions to show that the "post-test" proportions are not of large magnitudes. I also added row and column percentages in table 1.

8. I am wondering whether the focus should be on 'what are we doing the CEEG': surely it is to identify something that we can/should treat; and, to identify something that will help us determine that we no longer need to do CEEG.

Thank you for this insight. I altered the discussion to reflect the uncertainty about the clinical meaningfulness of the prognostic information and highlight the need for prospective studies to address the important questions. This is from the new version of the

manuscript: "This study reveals statistically significant associations between NCS and mortality and between RPPs and longer hospital stays, supporting the clinical gestalt of identifying and treating potentially harmful CEEG patterns is worthwhile. However, the incurred excess risks of morbidity and mortality in patients with NCS or RPPs was relatively modest. Such modest increases are not likely to be of clinical significance to clinicians evaluating patient prognoses. Nonetheless, this study was a retrospective study with limitations that preclude definitive conclusions about morbidity and mortality risk magnitudes, which are better assessed with prospective studies and in well-developed CEEG programs.

Prior studies have not definitively proven that utilizing CEEG leads to better outcomes^{2, 5}. This, coupled with the significant resources required to effectively run an ICU CEEG program², may lead decision-makers in developing healthcare systems to hesitate to support the development of CEEG practices and research. This study presents data from a small and developing program to demonstrate the real-world effectiveness of CEEG in detecting potentially harmful electrophysiological patterns. In addition, the study highlights the uncertainties regarding the clinical significance of the prognostic information provided by CEEG. Hopefully, this should lead to further development of ICU CEEG programs with embedded prospective, patient-centered research programs. Such research should focus on how CEEG may be used effectively and optimally and how the generated data may impact clinical decisions and patient outcomes in the ICU."

Once again, thank you very much for your thorough review of this manuscript and your valuable insights. Much appreciated.

Sincerely,
Haythum Tayeb

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Report 23 May 2019

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Peter W Kaplan

Department of Neurology, Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore, MD, USA

How many of the NCSE were focal versus generalized?

Did not the mortality vary with etiology of NCSE and PDs?

I would add in the final section on limitations of the study that there is perforce selection bias as the EEG techs were not available during certain periods (if I remember, overnight and other times) and this should be stated.

Possibly an EEG example of NCSE should be provided.

Is the work clearly and accurately presented and does it cite the current literature?

Yes

Is the study design appropriate and is the work technically sound?

Yes

Are sufficient details of methods and analysis provided to allow replication by others?

Yes

If applicable, is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?

I cannot comment. A qualified statistician is required.

Are all the source data underlying the results available to ensure full reproducibility?

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the results?

Yes

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: EEG

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard.

Author Response 25 Aug 2019

Haythum Tayeb, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Dear Dr. Kaplan,

Thank you very much for kindly reviewing my manuscript entitled: "The yield of continuous EEG monitoring in the intensive care unit at a tertiary care hospital in Saudi Arabia: A retrospective study". I value your insights. I have submitted a new version of this manuscript that took in consideration your comments and followed your suggestions as well as the other peer review I received. I briefly respond to your comments below as well:

1. How many of the NCSE were focal versus generalized?

I included in the new version of the article that "There were 52 patients with NCS. Among them, 30 were of focal onset (57.7%)".

2. Did not the mortality vary with etiology of NCSE and PDs?

The frequency of NCS etiologies in the group that was deceased at 60 days is now shown in a flow chart figure (figure 1). There was no statistically significant difference in mortality risk between the etiologies. Unfortunately, the number of cases in most subgroups was too small to permit subgroup analysis. I addressed this in the new version of the manuscript.

3. I would add in the final section on limitations of the study that there is perforce selection bias as the EEG techs were not available during certain periods (if I remember, overnight and other times) and this should be stated.

Added.

4. Possibly an EEG example of NCSE should be provided.

Added.

Once again, thank very much for your time and insights.

Sincerely,
Haythum Tayeb

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

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