Psychiatric outcome of surgery for temporal lobe epilepsy and presurgical considerations

J Foong & Dominique Flügel

In recent years, surgery has become a treatment option for some patients with intractable epilepsy, particularly those with temporal lobe epilepsy. Psychiatric disturbances may complicate the postsurgical outcome in some patients and de novo psychiatric symptoms have been reported. In many but not all epilepsy surgical centres, a psychiatric assessment is included as part of the presurgical evaluation of potential candidates for surgery. This review indicates that affective disorders, namely, depression and anxiety, and psychosis are the most frequently reported postsurgical psychiatric disturbances. Whilst there are no absolute psychiatric contraindications to surgery, certain pre-existing psychiatric conditions may need careful consideration as there may be a risk of postsurgical psychiatric complications. Routine pre- and postsurgical psychiatric evaluations in patients undergoing epilepsy surgery are recommended. Clinicians involved in the care of surgical candidates should be aware of the possible psychiatric complications following surgery and ensure that the psychiatric risks are discussed with the patient and family.