Teaching *NeuroImages*: De novo absence status epilepticus in an adult

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A 52-year-old man was found wandering at night. He was oriented to name only with no other neurologic signs. Laboratory work, CSF analysis, and brain MRI were unremarkable. EEG (figure) showed profuse generalized spike wave activity. His symptoms and EEG normalized with levetiracetam. On recovery, the patient denied previous seizures but admitted to a benzodiazepine habit.

De novo absence status epilepticus is a rare form of nonconvulsive status epilepticus typically encountered in older adults without prior epilepsy in the setting of benzodiazepine withdrawal, metabolic derangement, or alcoholism.¹ Treatment with anticonvulsants used in the idiopathic generalized epilepsies is effective.²

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Dr. Datta contributed to concept, analysis and interpretation, and drafting/revising of the manuscript. Dr. Hope contributed to concept, analysis

Figure Absence status epilepticus in a 52-year-old man with confusion

Frequent bursts of generalized spike-wave activity superimposed on a slow background (10-second EEG epoch, bipolar longitudinal montage, gain 10 μ V/mm).

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