Teaching NeuroImages:

A spiritual visual hallucination from a right parieto-occipital seizure

Ictal guardian angel

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Figure 1 Patient's drawings and descriptions of her "guardian angel" visual hallucination

A 59-year-old woman with epilepsy reported episodes of dizziness, blurred vision, and an occasional stereotyped visual hallucination of a guardian angel. She had experienced this recurrent hallucination since childhood, and could draw it in detail (figure 1). MRI brain revealed a right parieto-occipital lesion (figure 2A). Inpatient EEG monitoring captured multiple seizures evolving over the right posterior quadrant. With one typical electrographic seizure (figure 2B), she awakened from stage II sleep, reporting seeing her guardian angel at bedside within 10 seconds of electrographic seizure offset. Among focal epilepsy patients, 0.4%–3.1% report ictal religious experiences.¹

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Dr. Wong drafted and revised the manuscript for content, including medical writing, contributed to study concept and design, and contributed to interpretation of data. Dr. Kellogg drafted and revised the manuscript for content, including medical writing, contributed to study concept and design, and contributed to interpretation of data.

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REFERENCE

1. Devinsky O, Lai G. Spirituality and religion in epilepsy. *Epilepsy Behav* 2008;12:636–643.

(A) Noncontrast MRI brain, T2 FLAIR axial and coronal views of right parieto-occipital lesion. (Lesion not well-visualized on sagittal cuts.) (B) EEG shows electrographic ictal pattern seen maximally at P4 on a longitudinal bipolar montage, followed by patient's push-button event.

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