

Title: Is epilepsy a genetic disease ?
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Abstract: Of course epilepsy has a genetic component, almost all conditions and diseases and most human physical and mental characteristics do. However, the genetic influences are often complex involving epigenetic, epistatic and non-genetic components. Genetic influences are most prominent in the early epileptic encephalopathies and in the epilepsies due to rare metabolic and congenital disorders, but in the great majority of other cases, including the idiopathic epilepsies, the genetic influence is not clear cut and often small. It is intellectually lazy to relabel these epilepsies 'genetic', as has been the recent ILAE proposal. In this talk, a brief overview of the epilepsies in which there are a strong genetic contribution and the genetic mechanisms involved will be given, then a short description given of the issues involved in the epilepsies with weak genetic influence and epilepsy pharmacogenetics. The importance and social implications of accurate terminology will be stressed.