

Experiencing auras? You may be a good candidate for epilepsy surgery

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People with epilepsy who experience multiple auras, sensations such as a cold breeze or bright light before they have a seizure, may be good candidates for epilepsy surgery because their seizures seem to be coming from one area of the brain, according to a study published in the August 21, 2007, issue of *Neurology*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology.

For the study, researchers examined 31 people with epilepsy who experienced multiple types of auras, such as a bad smell, psychic experience, or abdominal pain.

The study found 90 percent of patients with at least two aura types and 100 percent of patients with at least three aura types had seizures arising from the non-dominant side of their brain.

“Epilepsy surgery may be effective for people with multiple auras since most of the seizures seem to arise from one area of the brain rather than multiple regions,” said study author Prakash Kotagal, MD, with Cleveland Clinic Epilepsy Center in Cleveland, OH, and member of the American Academy of Neurology.

The study also found more than half of the 19 study participants who went on to have epilepsy surgery stopped having seizures.

Before now, researchers say little has been known about the significance of having multiple auras since most of the attention has been focused on people with single auras.

“Multiple auras may be underestimated since auras are often difficult and time-consuming to elicit from a patient, particularly if their importance is not appreciated by the patient’s doctor,” said study co-author Peter Widdess-Walsh, MD, with Saint Barnabas Institute of Neurology in West Orange, New Jersey, and member of the American Academy of Neurology. “However, our findings

show multiple auras should be recognized by doctors as a significant finding and should be used in deciding whether to proceed with epilepsy surgery.”

Source: American Academy of Neurology

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