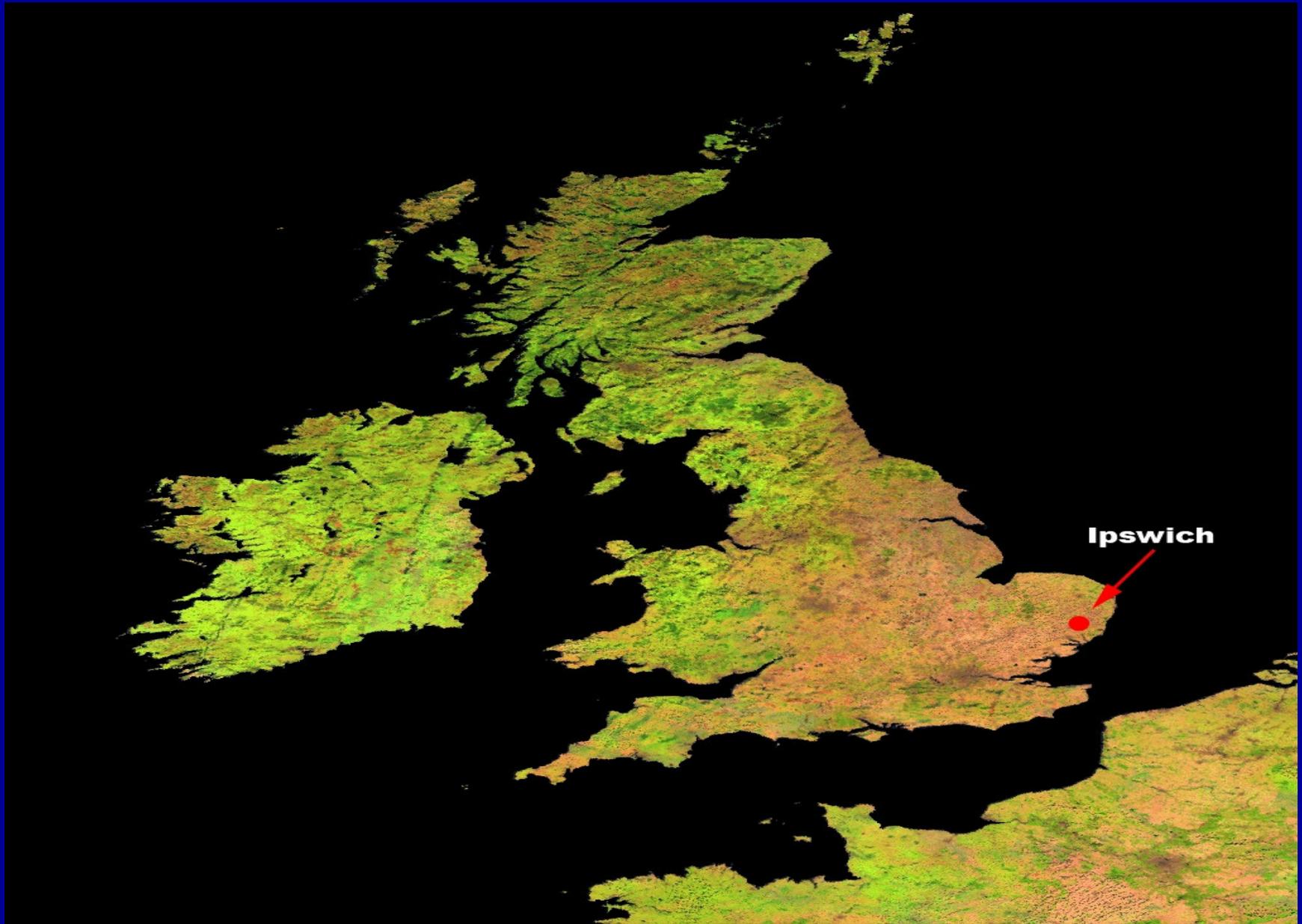


# THE SPECIALIST NURSE INTERVENTION: PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING

Marianne Peachey  
Epilepsy Specialist Nurse  
The Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust



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# NURSING

Is it Art or Science?

Hospital  
Consultants

General Practitioners

Hospital  
Nursing Staff

Nursing/Residential  
Home Staff

Occupational  
Therapist

Community  
Psychiatric Nurses

ESN

Neurosurgeon

British Epilepsy  
Association

Psychologist

Counsellors

Disability  
Employment Advisor

Social Services

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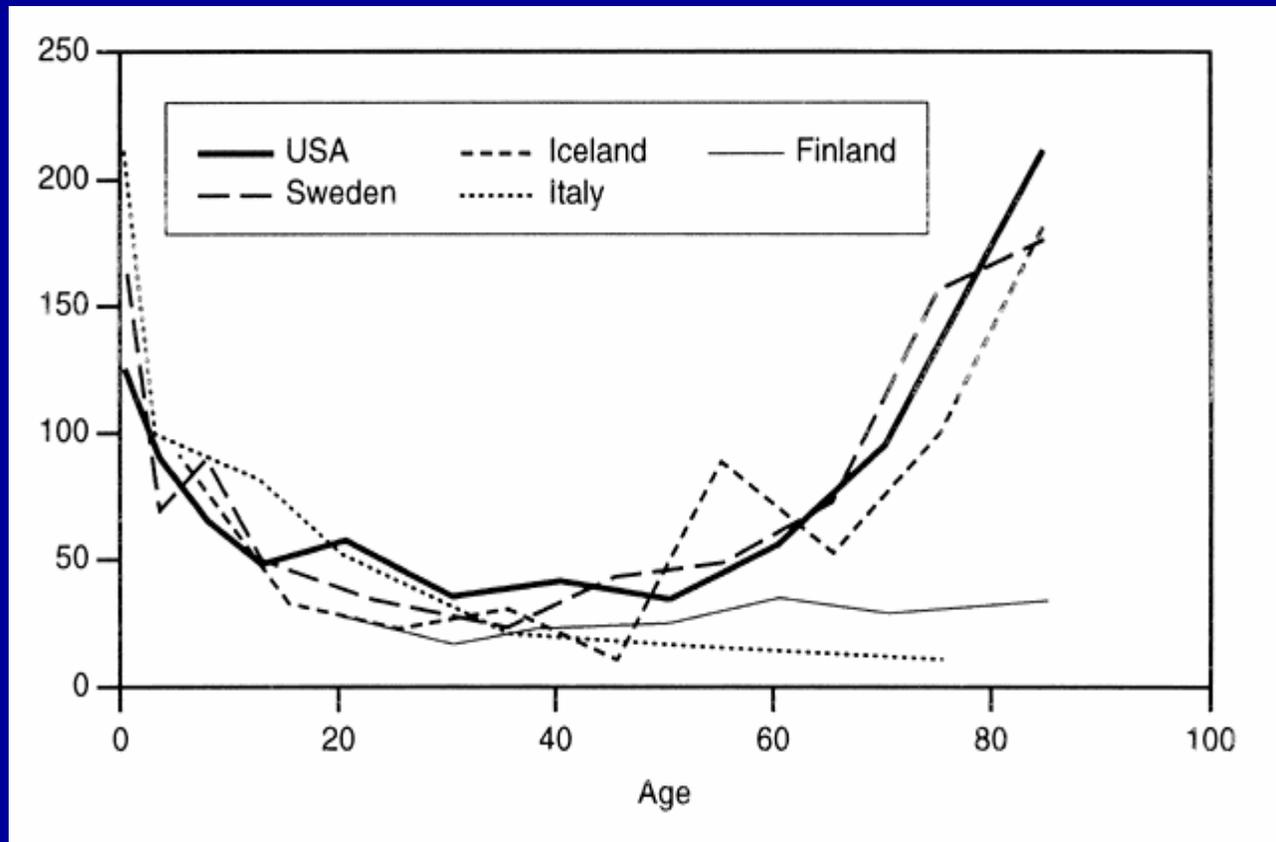
# AIMS OF THE EPILEPSY SPECIALIST NURSE INTERVENTION

- To identify the knowledge and beliefs people have about epilepsy
- To ask the right questions to discover people's lifestyle and any concerns
- To build a comprehensive picture of how their lives could be affected by epilepsy
- To provide appropriate advice and information for each individual
- To empower people to take control and manage their condition

# REFERRALS

- Newly diagnosed patients - from the fast track Suspected Seizure clinic
- Consultant Neurologists
- Ward referrals – Hospital Physicians
- GP's – 400 in Suffolk
- Paediatricians – adolescent handover
- Obstetricians & Midwives – during pregnancy
- Self-referral from patients – via Helpline

# A BROAD RANGE OF AGES



Age-specific incidence of Epilepsy in industrialised countries

# DO THEY KNOW?

- What epilepsy is
- Why they have epilepsy
- How it affects them
- What happens in the brain when they have a seizure
- What their usual seizures are like

# DO THEY AND THEIR FAMILY KNOW?

- What to do when they have a seizure
- If they need any emergency medication
- How to use emergency medication
- When to get help and from whom
- Where to get identity jewellery from

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# DO THEY UNDERSTAND?

- Their treatment
- How it works
- How to take it
- What to do if they miss a dose
- What side effects to look for
- The need to take it regularly



# MEDICATIONS

- Sodium Valproate\* (Epilim)
- Carbamazepine\* (Tegretol)
- Lamotrigine\* (Lamictal)
- Levetiracetam (Keppra)
- Topiramate (Topamax)
- Gabapentin (Neurontin)
- Pregabalin (Lyrica)
- Phenytoin (Epanutin)

# MEDICATION SCHEDULE

## ANTI-EPILEPTIC MEDICATION SCHEDULE

Clinical Neurology, The Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust  
Heath Road Ipswich Suffolk IP4 5PD

Dr Manji/Dr Graham/Dr Brierley/Dr Galton/Dr Chandran/Prof Baron

**Marianne Peachey Tel 01473 704046**  
**Epilepsy Specialist Nurse**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Dr

The above patient attended our outpatient clinic today. I would be grateful if you would prescribe the following adjustments to their medication regime. Clinic letter to follow. A follow-up appointment will be arranged for \_\_\_\_ months time.

| MEDICATION | Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4 | Week 5 | Week 6 | Week 7 | Week 8 |
|------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Am<br>Pm   |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|            |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| Am<br>Pm   |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|            |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| Am<br>Pm   |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|            |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |

Additional Notes:

To the Patient: Please show this to your GP's receptionist within 7 days to photocopy, then keep the original as a guide.

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# DO THEY KNOW?

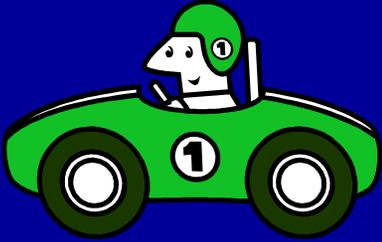
That lifestyle can affect their epilepsy



# DISCOVER WHAT THEY THINK IS?

- The most frightening thing about having seizures
- The likelihood that someone will die during a seizure
- The best way to minimise the risk
- The risk of Suicide

# HAVE THEY CONSIDERED?



- The driving regulations – 1 year ban in the UK from date of last seizure
- That auras are classified as seizures
- How the driving regulations will affect their life – in the UK up to 50% discount off public transport, buses free in some areas
- Access to work Scheme

# DO THEY?

- Have realistic career plans – especially for adolescents
- Know how a diagnosis of epilepsy may affect their employment – safety, driving
- Know who can help them – government agencies



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# DO THEY THINK?

- That there are some activities they should not do
- That some people have misconceptions about epilepsy
- That there are practical steps they can take to improve their safety



## DO WOMEN KNOW?

- That some women have more seizures around the time of their period
- Whether their medication affects the contraceptive pill
- That they should seek advice from a doctor or an epilepsy nurse if they wish to become pregnant
- That people with epilepsy can expect to have a normal family life

# WHAT ABOUT PREGNANCY?

- Seizure frequency – 2/3 same or improve
- Women with epilepsy have slightly reduced fertility
- It is safe to increase medication after the first trimester
- Lamotrigine levels can drop during latter stages of pregnancy
- Pethidine can lower the seizure threshold
- Breastfeeding – fine on all anti-epileptic drugs
- Discuss safety issues – looking after baby

# HAVE THEY?

- Felt anxious or depressed about the diagnosis of epilepsy
- Obtained any information about the condition
- Joined an epilepsy organisation
- Contacted a local support group
- Discussed their anxieties with anyone
- Developed coping strategies

# SUMMARY

- LISTEN to people with epilepsy
- ASK the right questions to discover what they are concerned about
- PROVIDE people with relevant information and advice
- EMPOWER patients with the knowledge to take control and manage their condition and .....

# ENJOY A NORMAL LIFE!



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