



## Paediatric Epilepsy Training Courses: Entry point to knowledge empowerment and practice change

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Prof J Wilmshurst

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10 February 2026



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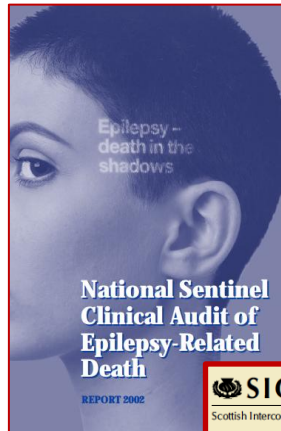
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# Why did BPNA short courses start?



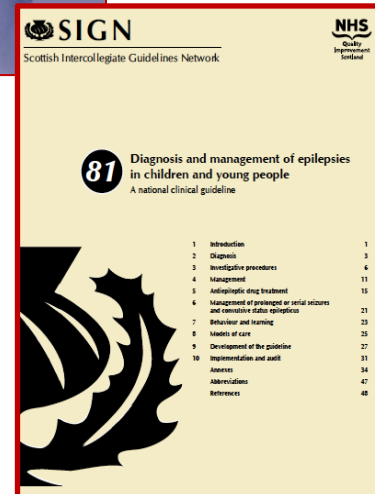
**Concern about standards of care**



**Victims misdiagnosed by doctor paid £4m in compensation**

The victims of a doctor who reduced children to "zombies" after misdiagnosing them have been paid more than £4m in compensation.

**Need to improve guideline implementation?**



**NICE** National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

**The epilepsies: the diagnosis and management of the epilepsies in adults and children in primary and secondary care**

Issued: January 2012 last modified: December 2013

NICE clinical guideline 137  
[guidance.nice.org.uk/cg137](http://guidance.nice.org.uk/cg137)



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# BPNA PET cited as exemplar, WHO, 2022



Paediatric Epilepsy Training (PET) aims to improve care worldwide for children and young people with seizures and epilepsies

Uses collaboratively designed educational materials linked to published clinical guidelines



Seeks to embed recommended best, safe practice into local health services

Forming networks!



Working closely with the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE)

Improving the lives of people with epilepsy:  
a technical brief



# PET1



Health-care workforce:  
case study

Changing pediatric care for epilepsy through cascade training



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# from 2013 to 2025



-  Running regular PET courses
-  PET launch planned
-  PET courses have taken place here

Some 21 000 health workers trained  
>350 faculty volunteer

Partnerships with country Paed Assoc  
English, Portuguese, Spanish, French



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# Course Development Teams



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# PET1

Delivers an introduction to the epilepsies and related conditions

Recognition of epileptic events and differential diagnoses

Principles of initial and safe management of children and young people with seizures

Management of children and young people with epilepsies in the acute setting

Inclusive of holistic care and equity rights



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# DESSCRIBE



D

- Description?

E

- Epileptic, non-epileptic or uncertain events(s)? Epilepsy?

S

- Seizure Type(s)?

S

- Syndrome?

C

- Cause?

R

- Relevant?

I

- Impairments?

B

- Behavioural and Emotional?

E

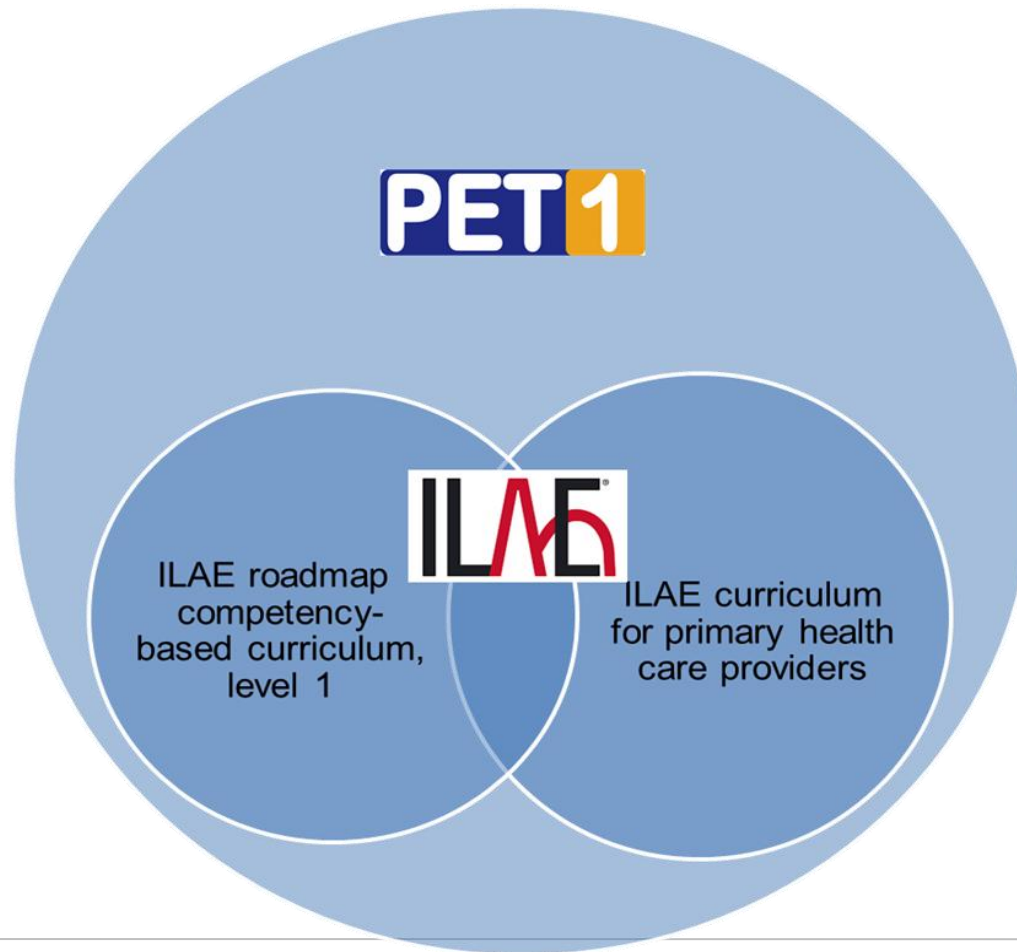
- Educational Issues



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PET1 maps to  
"Level 1" ILAE  
curriculum for  
children and  
young people



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# Ethos of PET



PET is leveled for any healthcare practitioner involved in the care of children with seizures

- Doctors – community / primary to specialist (all benefit)
- Nurses
- Technologist
- Paramedic
- etc

Pre-course reading



Small and large group teaching sessions



Based on adult learning methods



Course content reviewed regularly with critique after each course



Same questions (online) asked before and after the course



Monitoring and Evaluation



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# Evidence of Impact of PET



1

Feedback analysed from  
>4000 delegates:

- Monitoring of standards
- Updating courses

2

Measurable improvements:

- Knowledge
- Attitudes & Practice survey: 98% tried to improve their clinical service for children following PET

3

75% report improved history-taking

4

54% use a structured formulation in clinical practice

5

30% now use status epilepticus guidelines for the management of prolonged seizures

6

Formal clinical networks (OPEN) and informal (WhatsApp groups) born out of PET



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# Evidence of Impact of PET



Received: 1 February 2023 | Accepted: 21 December 2023  
DOI: 10.1111/dmcn.15864

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE



### Reducing epilepsy diagnostic and treatment gaps: Standardized paediatric epilepsy training courses for health care professionals

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Martin Kirkpatrick<sup>1</sup>



Endorsed and supported by  
**ILAE** International League  
Against Epilepsy



[rebrand.ly/PET-impact](https://rebrand.ly/PET-impact)

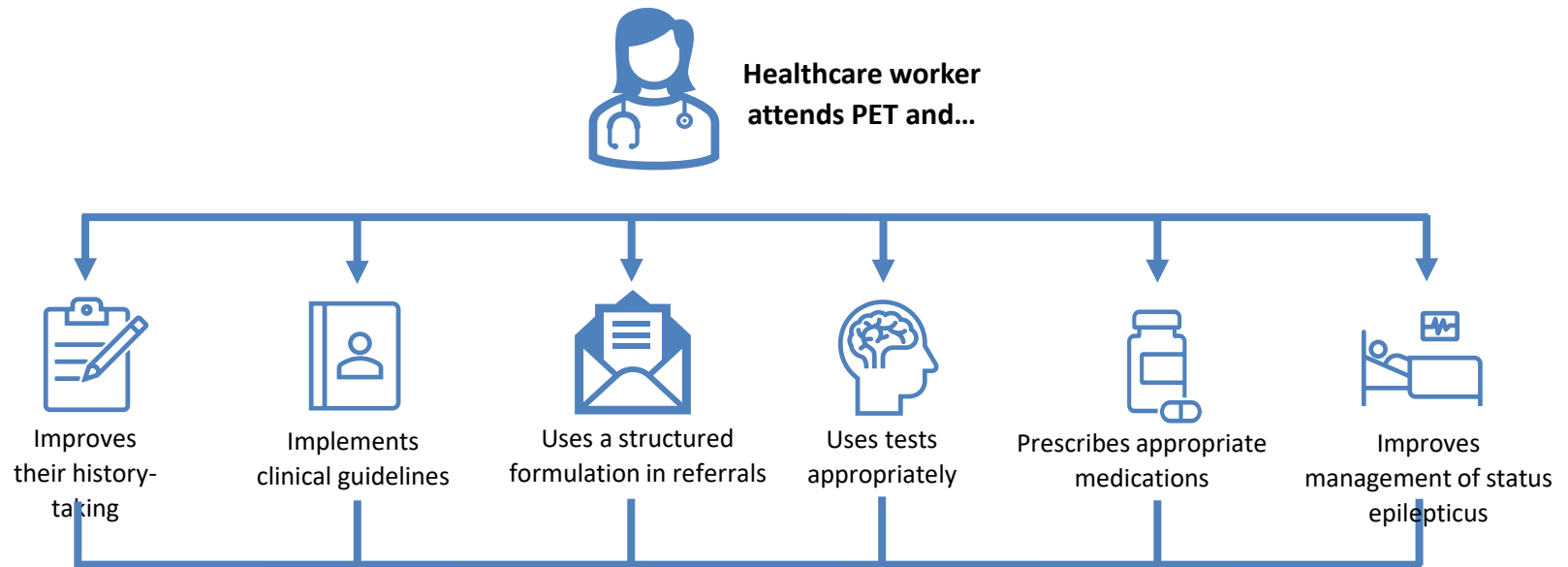


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# What Difference has PET made?



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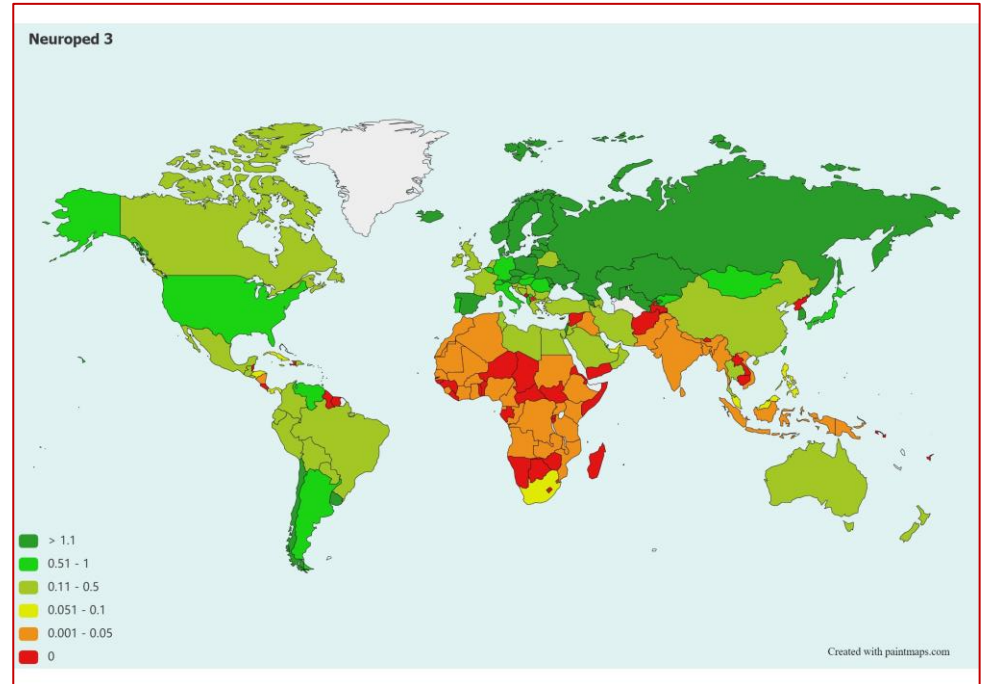
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# Heat map for number of child neurologists per 100 000 population



- Access to Pediatric Neurology training and services worldwide: A survey by Neurology Association. Wilmshurst JM, Catsman-Berrevoets C, Gilbert DL, Nagarajan L, Samia P, Serdaroglu E, Triki C, Vidaurre J, Hameed B; for Pediatric Neurology Training study group. Neurology. 2023 Jul 25;doi: 10.1212/WNL.0000000000207633.



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# International PET – Why and How?



## International Demand

- PET1 now global



ILAE endorsement & support



“In the shadow of epilepsy”



### Principles:

- Consistent Standards (Curriculum delivery, Faculty Training)
- Sustainability 5 years plus
- Quality Assurance

## THE LANCET

Volume 349, Number 9069

### EDITORIAL

#### In the shadow of epilepsy

What disease affects 40 million people worldwide, yet three-quarters are untreated? Paradoxically, the same disease, with early diagnosis and treatment, can be controlled in about three-quarters of those affected. The disease is epilepsy, the commonest serious brain disorder in every country in the world.

developed world has around one neurologist per 30–300 000 population, compared with one per 3–10 million in the developing world, where some countries have virtually no specialist epilepsy centres. Adding to this treatment gap is the fact that 80% of the market for antiepileptic drugs is in 15%

*“75% untreated, yet 75% are easily treatable”*

Day 1 – PET training - local faculty as participants

Day 2 – PET philosophy, “train the trainers”, quality assurance

Day 3 – PET training - Local faculty as trainers



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# African Story



PET adapted for relevance to Africa 2015

01

Feb 2016: Cape Town – trained 35 African Faculty

02

2016-2019: Multiple courses across South Africa (2-3 per yr)  
2017: Kisumu, Kenya

03

04

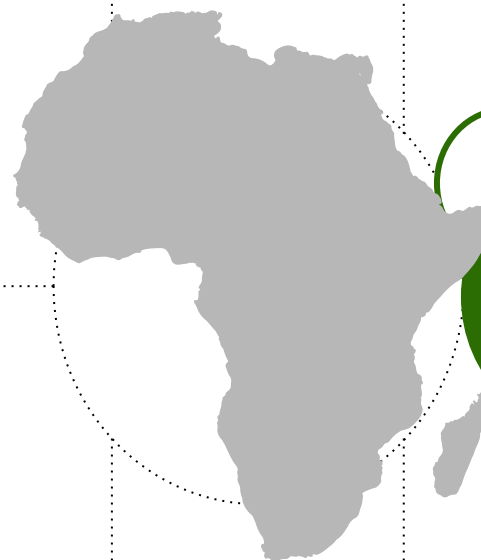
2018: Expanded faculty – further 35 faculty  
Kenya / Tanzania / Ghana / Uganda

05

2019 Courses:  
SA/ Tanzania (African Region funded)  
Kenya/ Ghana/ Namibia/ Uganda (African Region funded)  
Angola (with Mozambique) (ILAE Ped Comission/ ICNA)

06

2020: COVID-19 Mauritius  
2021 – 2025: exponential courses, 2 more country faculties



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- The established faculties supports the sustainability of the project n=8
  - Reached n=13 countries
- Now available on-line – successful courses in Ghana, Kenya, pan Africa, Mozambique
- 2023
  - PET Faculties Zimbabwe & Zambia
  - Adult adaptation underway (ETAM) pilot Tanzania AND Zim faculty 2025
- 2024 Nov – Tunisia TTT faculty roll-out for Francophile courses



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# Malawi Experience – 2024 (Blantyre) & 2025 (Lilongwe)



- South African / Tanzanian / Ugandan faculty
- Examples of delegate statements
  - Not aware of infantile epileptic spasms
  - Children frequently excluded from schooling – concern infected or bewitched
  - Treating SFS with phenobarbital
  - No protocol or sustainable approach for status epilepticus



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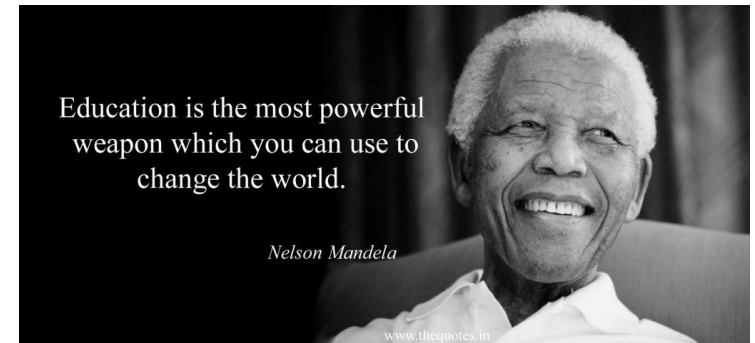
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# In Summary



- Over last 9 years estimated reached over 2000 health care workers in Africa
  - Reaching practitioners who are either institutional leaders or those “at the rock face”
  - Creating a common “language “ and approach to children with seizures.
- Next need to measure the clinical impact from the courses.....



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