

**Berg AT. Understanding the delay before epilepsy surgery: Who develops intractable focal epilepsy and when? CNS Spectrums 2004;9:136-144.**

Intractable temporal lobe epilepsy that is surgically treated in adulthood is a disorder whose onset frequently occurs during childhood and early adolescence. The average duration of epilepsy prior to surgery is on the order of 20 years. The long delay between onset and surgery has at least two components: time from onset to intractability and time from evidence of intractability to surgery. The first interval is prolonged (>10) years especially if the onset is during childhood. This suggests a complex natural history that we have not fully appreciated as well as a potential window of opportunity for early secondary intervention. The second interval is also prolonged, especially if onset was during childhood. Reasons for this are not fully clear but may include a reluctance to consider surgery and perhaps difficulty deciding whether seizures are sufficiently intractable to warrant surgery especially after what may have been a relatively benign initial course. Factors involved in the second delay need to be better understood so that surgical interventions can be appropriately targeted early rather than late thereby reducing serious social, psychological, and educational consequences associated with uncontrolled seizures.