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Mapping the Epileptogenic Landscape: A Multimodal MRI Study in Drug-Resistant Epilepsy Patients in India

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A B S T R A C T

Introduction: Drug-resistant epilepsy (DRE) poses a significant challenge to patient management, necessitating precise localization of the epileptogenic zone (EZ) for potential surgical intervention. This study aims to evaluate the utility of multimodal MRI techniques in delineating the EZ in DRE patients in India. **Methods:** A retrospective analysis was conducted on 50 DRE patients who underwent multimodal MRI evaluation, including high-resolution T1-weighted imaging, T2-weighted imaging, fluid-attenuated inversion recovery (FLAIR), diffusion-weighted imaging (DWI), and susceptibility-weighted imaging (SWI), at a tertiary care center in India. MRI findings were correlated with electroencephalography (EEG) and surgical outcomes. **Results:** MRI abnormalities were detected in 82% of patients. The most common findings included hippocampal sclerosis (34%), focal cortical dysplasia (26%), and gliosis (18%). DWI and SWI revealed subtle abnormalities in 20% of patients not detected on conventional MRI. Concordance between MRI and EEG was observed in 76% of cases. Surgical outcomes were favorable in 70% of patients with complete resection of the MRI-defined EZ. **Conclusion:** Multimodal MRI is a valuable tool for mapping the epileptogenic landscape in DRE patients. It aids in the identification of subtle abnormalities, enhances the accuracy of EZ localization, and contributes to improved surgical outcomes.

1. Introduction

Epilepsy, a chronic neurological disorder characterized by recurrent unprovoked seizures, affects an estimated 50 million individuals globally, imposing a substantial burden on patients, families, and healthcare systems. Despite the availability of a wide array of anti-seizure medications (ASMs), approximately 30% of individuals with epilepsy continue to experience seizures that remain refractory to pharmacological treatment, a condition known as drug-resistant epilepsy (DRE). The persistence of seizures in DRE not only significantly impairs the quality of life but also carries an increased risk of mortality and morbidity. The challenges associated with DRE underscore the urgent need for innovative approaches to improve seizure control and enhance the overall well-being of affected individuals. For patients grappling with the relentless challenges of DRE, surgical resection of the epileptogenic zone (EZ), the brain region responsible for generating seizures, offers a potential avenue for achieving long-term seizure freedom and improving quality of life. The success of surgical intervention hinges on the precise identification and complete removal of the EZ. However, the accurate delineation of the EZ remains a formidable challenge, particularly in cases where the epileptogenic focus is elusive or resides in the eloquent cortex. The quest for reliable and precise methods to map the epileptogenic landscape has driven extensive

research and innovation in the field of epilepsy surgery.[1-3]

In recent years, multimodal magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) has emerged as a cornerstone in the pre-surgical evaluation of patients with DRE. This non-invasive imaging modality harnesses the power of various MRI sequences to provide a comprehensive view of the structural and functional abnormalities associated with the EZ. High-resolution T1-weighted imaging, T2-weighted imaging, fluid-attenuated inversion recovery (FLAIR), diffusion-weighted imaging (DWI), and susceptibility-weighted imaging (SWI) offer complementary insights into the epileptogenic brain, enabling clinicians to identify subtle lesions, characterize tissue properties, and assess functional networks. The integration of these diverse imaging modalities into a multimodal approach has revolutionized the way we visualize and understand the epileptogenic landscape, paving the way for more targeted and effective surgical interventions.[4,5]

Multimodal MRI has proven instrumental in identifying a wide spectrum of structural abnormalities that underlie drug resistance in epilepsy. Mesial temporal sclerosis, characterized by hippocampal atrophy and increased T2 signal, is a common finding in patients with temporal lobe epilepsy and is strongly associated with drug resistance. Focal cortical dysplasia, a malformation of cortical development, is another frequent substrate of DRE, often manifesting as subtle blurring of the gray-white matter junction or abnormal cortical thickening. Other structural lesions, such as tumors, vascular malformations, and areas of gliosis (scarring), can also contribute to drug resistance and can be readily detected on MRI. The ability of multimodal MRI to visualize these diverse structural abnormalities has significantly enhanced our understanding of the pathophysiological mechanisms underlying DRE and has facilitated more informed surgical decision-making. While conventional MRI sequences provide valuable structural information, advanced MRI techniques, such as DWI and SWI, offer additional insights into the epileptogenic brain. DWI, which measures the diffusion of water molecules in tissue, can reveal subtle changes in tissue microstructure associated with epilepsy, even in the absence of overt structural abnormalities. SWI, which is sensitive to blood products and other paramagnetic substances, can detect microhemorrhages or calcifications that may be indicative of an epileptogenic lesion. The integration of DWI and SWI into multimodal MRI protocols has been shown to improve the detection rate of epileptogenic lesions and enhance the accuracy of EZ localization. While the global burden of epilepsy is substantial, the challenges associated with its management are particularly pronounced in developing countries like India, where access to specialized healthcare and advanced diagnostic tools may be limited. The prevalence of epilepsy in India is estimated to be around 5.59 per 1000 population, with a significant proportion of patients experiencing drug resistance. The heterogeneity of epilepsy etiologies in India, including neuroinfections, tuberculomas, and neurocysticercosis, further complicates the diagnostic and therapeutic landscape. In this context, the availability and utilization of multimodal MRI can play a crucial role in improving the management of DRE patients in India.[6-8]

While MRI excels in visualizing structural abnormalities, electroencephalography (EEG) remains the gold standard for capturing the electrical activity of the brain and identifying epileptiform discharges associated with seizures. The integration of MRI and EEG findings is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the epileptogenic network and for guiding surgical decision-making. Concordance between MRI and EEG findings has been shown to be a strong predictor of successful surgical outcomes in DRE. Multimodal MRI, by providing detailed anatomical and functional information, can aid in interpreting EEG findings and resolving ambiguities in cases where the seizure onset zone is unclear or multifocal.[9,10] This study aim to evaluate the utility of multimodal MRI in delineating the EZ in a cohort of DRE patients in India.

2. Methods

This research endeavor adopts a retrospective observational design, meticulously analyzing data collected from a cohort of patients with drug-resistant

epilepsy (DRE) who underwent multimodal MRI evaluation at a distinguished tertiary care center in India. The study period spanned from January 2018 to December 2023, encompassing a five-year window during which advancements in MRI technology and epilepsy management protocols were actively evolving. The patient population comprised 50 consecutive individuals, aged between 18 and 50 years, who met the stringent criteria for DRE. The diagnosis of DRE was established based on the widely accepted definition of the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE), which stipulates the failure of two or more appropriately chosen and well-tolerated anti-seizure medications (ASMs) to achieve sustained seizure freedom. This rigorous criterion ensured the inclusion of patients with genuinely refractory epilepsy, thereby enhancing the clinical relevance and translational potential of the study findings. To maintain the integrity of the dataset and ensure the reliability of the analyses, specific exclusion criteria were implemented. Patients with incomplete or inadequate MRI data, precluding a comprehensive evaluation of the epileptogenic zone, were excluded from the study. Additionally, individuals with contraindications to MRI, such as the presence of metallic implants or claustrophobia, were also excluded to safeguard patient safety and optimize data quality. The study protocol was meticulously designed to adhere to the highest ethical standards and protect the rights and well-being of the participants. The study was reviewed and approved by the institutional ethics committee, and informed consent was obtained from all patients prior to their inclusion in the study.

All patients underwent a standardized multimodal MRI protocol, meticulously executed on a state-of-the-art 3T MRI scanner (Manufacturer, Model, Country) equipped with a dedicated head coil. The protocol encompassed a symphony of MRI sequences, each designed to capture distinct facets of the epileptogenic brain; High-Resolution T1-weighted Imaging: This sequence, employing a three-dimensional magnetization-prepared rapid gradient echo (MPRAGE) technique, provided exquisite anatomical detail of the brain, enabling the visualization of subtle cortical abnormalities and volumetric assessments of key structures such as the hippocampus; T2-weighted Imaging: Utilizing a fast spin echo (FSE) sequence, T2-weighted imaging offered complementary information about tissue contrast, highlighting areas of increased water content, such as edema or gliosis, which are often associated with epileptogenic lesions; FLAIR Imaging: Fluid-attenuated inversion recovery (FLAIR), another FSE sequence with inversion recovery, suppressed the signal from cerebrospinal fluid, thereby enhancing the conspicuity of periventricular and cortical lesions, particularly those associated with inflammation or demyelination; Diffusion-weighted Imaging (DWI): Employing an echo-planar imaging (EPI) sequence with varying b-values, DWI provided insights into the diffusion of water molecules within brain tissue. This enabled the detection of subtle changes in tissue microstructure, such as those associated with cortical dysplasia or gliosis, even in the absence of overt structural abnormalities; Susceptibility-weighted Imaging (SWI): This gradient echo (GRE) sequence with phase filtering was exquisitely sensitive to blood products and other paramagnetic substances, allowing for the visualization of microhemorrhages, calcifications, or other subtle markers of epileptogenic activity. The meticulous execution of this multimodal MRI protocol ensured the acquisition of a rich tapestry of imaging data, providing a comprehensive view of the structural and functional landscape of the epileptogenic brain.

The MRI images were subjected to a rigorous and systematic analysis by two seasoned neuroradiologists, each possessing extensive expertise in the interpretation of epilepsy-related imaging findings. To eliminate potential bias, the neuroradiologists were blinded to the clinical and EEG data of the patients, ensuring an objective and unbiased assessment of the imaging findings. The neuroradiologists meticulously scrutinized the images, focusing on a constellation of MRI features known to be associated with epileptogenic lesions. These included; Hippocampal Sclerosis: Characterized by atrophy, loss of internal architecture, and increased T2/FLAIR signal intensity in the hippocampus, this hallmark of mesial temporal sclerosis is a frequent finding in patients with temporal lobe epilepsy and is

strongly linked to drug resistance; Focal Cortical Dysplasia: This malformation of cortical development manifests as subtle blurring of the gray-white matter junction, abnormal cortical thickening, or increased T2/FLAIR signal intensity in the cortex. Its detection often requires meticulous scrutiny of high-resolution MRI images; Gliosis: Indicative of scarring or injury in the brain, gliosis appears as increased T2/FLAIR signal intensity, often accompanied by volume loss. It can be a consequence of prior brain insults, inflammation, or surgical interventions; Other Abnormalities: The neuroradiologists remained vigilant for other less common structural lesions, such as tumors, vascular malformations, or encephalomalacia, which can also contribute to drug resistance. In addition to conventional MRI sequences, the neuroradiologists carefully evaluated DWI and SWI images, searching for subtle abnormalities that might not be readily apparent on standard imaging. These subtle findings, often representing microstructural changes or microhemorrhages, can provide crucial clues for localizing the epileptogenic zone, particularly in cases where conventional MRI is unremarkable. The location and extent of all identified MRI abnormalities were meticulously documented and correlated with the EEG findings and surgical outcomes, enabling a comprehensive assessment of the concordance between these diagnostic modalities and their impact on therapeutic decision-making.

In conjunction with the MRI evaluation, all patients underwent long-term video-EEG monitoring, a cornerstone in the diagnosis and management of epilepsy. This sophisticated technique involves the continuous recording of brain electrical activity using scalp electrodes, coupled with synchronized video monitoring to capture and analyze any clinical manifestations of seizures. The EEG recordings were meticulously reviewed by experienced neurophysiologists, who focused on identifying and characterizing epileptiform activity, the hallmark of epilepsy. The seizure onset zone, the brain region where seizures originate, was carefully delineated based on the spatiotemporal patterns of epileptiform discharges. The EEG findings were classified as focal, multifocal, or generalized, reflecting the extent and distribution of the epileptogenic network.

Surgical resection was offered to patients with concordant MRI and EEG findings, indicating a well-defined and surgically accessible epileptogenic zone. The surgical procedures were performed by a team of skilled neurosurgeons, guided by the precise localization information gleaned from the multimodal MRI and EEG evaluations. The surgical outcomes were assessed at one-year follow-up, using the Engel classification system, a widely accepted scale for quantifying seizure outcomes after epilepsy surgery. The Engel classification comprises four classes; Class I: Seizure-free; Class II: Rare disabling seizures; Class III: Worthwhile improvement; Class IV: No worthwhile improvement. Favorable outcomes were defined as Engel class I or II, representing seizure freedom or a significant reduction in seizure frequency and severity. The association between complete resection of the MRI-defined EZ and favorable surgical outcomes was statistically analyzed to assess the predictive value of MRI in guiding surgical decision-making.

The data collected from this study were subjected to rigorous statistical analysis to identify meaningful patterns and associations. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize patient demographics, MRI findings, EEG findings, and surgical outcomes. The concordance between MRI and EEG was assessed using the kappa statistic, a robust measure of agreement that accounts for chance agreement. The association between MRI findings and surgical outcomes was analyzed using the chi-square test, a statistical method for evaluating the relationship between categorical variables. A p-value of less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant, indicating a low probability that the observed association occurred by chance.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1 provides a summary of the key demographic characteristics of the patient cohort included in the study. A total of 50 patients were included in the study. This sample size, while not very large, provides a reasonable basis for drawing initial conclusions about the use of multimodal MRI in this

population. The mean age of the patients was 32 years, with a range from 18 to 50 years. This indicates that the study included both younger and older adults, which is important for understanding the applicability of the findings to different age groups. The cohort was slightly skewed towards males, with 56% of the patients being male and 44% being female. While this slight imbalance might need to be considered in the interpretation of the results, it is unlikely to significantly impact the overall conclusions. The mean duration of epilepsy was 12 years, with a range from 2 to 30 years. This suggests that the study included patients with varying durations of epilepsy, from those with relatively recent onset to those with long-standing drug-resistant epilepsy. This diversity is valuable for understanding how the utility of multimodal MRI might differ across different stages of the disease.

Table 1. Patient demographics.

Characteristic	Value
Total number of patients	50
Mean age (years)	32 (18-50)
Gender (Male/Female)	28 (56%) / 22 (44%)
Mean duration of epilepsy (years)	12 (2-30)

Table 2 presents a breakdown of the various MRI abnormalities detected in the 50 patients with drug-resistant epilepsy (DRE) who underwent multimodal MRI evaluation; High Detection Rate: A significant majority (82%) of the patients exhibited some form of MRI abnormality. This underscores the importance of MRI as a sensitive tool for identifying potential epileptogenic zones in DRE; Hippocampal Sclerosis (34%): This was the most frequent finding, suggesting its prominence in the etiology of DRE in this patient population. Hippocampal sclerosis is a well-recognized cause of temporal lobe epilepsy, often associated with drug resistance; Focal Cortical Dysplasia (26%): The second most common abnormality, focal cortical dysplasia, represents a disruption in the normal development of the cerebral cortex. It is a frequent cause of epilepsy, particularly in cases with drug resistance; Gliosis (18%): Gliosis, indicative of scarring or injury in the brain, was also observed in a substantial proportion of patients. This suggests a potential role for prior brain insults or inflammation in the development of DRE; Other Abnormalities (4%): A small percentage of patients had other less common abnormalities, including cavernous angioma and low-grade glioma, highlighting the heterogeneity of structural lesions that can be associated with DRE; Subtle Abnormalities (20%): The detection of subtle abnormalities in 20% of patients using DWI and SWI, which were not apparent on conventional MRI, emphasizes the added value of these advanced techniques in improving the sensitivity of epileptogenic zone localization.

Table 2. MRI findings.

Finding	Number of patients	Percentage (%)
MRI abnormalities detected	41	82
Hippocampal sclerosis	17	34
Focal cortical dysplasia	13	26
Gliosis	9	18
Other abnormalities	2	4
Subtle abnormalities (DWI/SWI)	10	20

Table 3 provides a breakdown of the types of epileptiform activity observed on EEG in the 50 patients with drug-resistant epilepsy (DRE). The most common finding was focal epileptiform activity, seen in 64% of patients. This indicates that in the majority of cases, the seizure onset zone could be localized to a specific region of the brain. This has important implications for potential surgical treatment, as a well-defined focal seizure onset zone increases the likelihood of successful surgical resection; Multifocal (20%): A significant proportion of patients exhibited multifocal epileptiform activity, suggesting a more widespread or complex epileptogenic network. This can pose challenges for surgical treatment, as complete resection of the epileptogenic zone might be more difficult or less feasible; Generalized (16%): A smaller percentage of patients had generalized epileptiform activity, indicating a diffuse epileptogenic process involving both hemispheres. Surgical treatment is generally not considered in such cases, as there is no clear focal area to target.

Table 3. EEG Findings

Finding	**Number of patients**	**Percentage (%)**
Focal epileptiform activity	32	64
Multifocal epileptiform activity	10	20
Generalized epileptiform activity	8	16

Table 4 provides insights into the agreement or consistency between the findings obtained from MRI scans and EEG recordings in the context of identifying the epileptogenic zone in patients with drug-resistant epilepsy. A notable 76% of the patients demonstrated concordance between their MRI and EEG findings. This suggests a strong agreement between these two diagnostic modalities in localizing the brain regions responsible for seizure generation. This high level of concordance reinforces the complementary nature of MRI and EEG in the evaluation of drug-resistant epilepsy. The Kappa statistic provides a quantitative measure of agreement beyond chance. A value of 0.62 indicates a substantial level of agreement, further supporting the reliability of the concordance observed between MRI and EEG. The very low p-value (<0.001) associated with the Kappa statistic indicates that the observed agreement is highly unlikely to have occurred by chance. This strengthens the conclusion that MRI and EEG findings are indeed significantly correlated in this patient population.

Table 4. Concordance between MRI and EEG.

Metric	**Value**
Concordant cases	38
Percentage concordance	76%
Kappa statistic	0.62
p-value	<0.001

Table 5 provides a concise overview of the surgical interventions and their outcomes in the context of your study on drug-resistant epilepsy. Out of the total patient cohort, 30 underwent surgical resection. However, complete one-year follow-up data was available for 28 patients. This slight attrition is common in clinical studies and should be acknowledged when interpreting the results. A promising 70% of patients who underwent surgery and had follow-up data experienced favorable outcomes, categorized as Engel class I (seizure-free) or II (rare disabling seizures). This suggests that surgical intervention can be an effective treatment option for a significant proportion of patients with drug-resistant

epilepsy. The table highlights a statistically significant association (p=0.02) between complete resection of the MRI-defined epileptogenic zone (EZ) and favorable outcomes. This underscores the critical importance of accurate pre-surgical identification and delineation of the EZ for maximizing the chances of seizure freedom or significant seizure reduction following surgery.

Table 5. Surgical outcomes.

Outcome measure	Value
Patients undergoing surgical resection	30
Patients with one-year follow-up data	28
Favorable outcomes (Engel Class I or II)	20 (70%)
Association with complete EZ resection (p-value)	0.02

The present study embarked on an ambitious quest to illuminate the intricate and often elusive terrain of the epileptogenic landscape in a cohort of patients grappling with the formidable challenge of drug-resistant epilepsy (DRE) in India. By harnessing the power of multimodal MRI, a technological marvel that allows us to peer into the depths of the living brain, we sought to unveil the structural and functional underpinnings of this recalcitrant condition. Our ultimate goal was to enhance the precision of epileptogenic zone (EZ) localization, thereby paving the way for more targeted and effective surgical interventions, and ultimately, improved patient outcomes. The human brain, a masterpiece of intricate neural networks and complex electrochemical signaling, remains one of the most enigmatic frontiers in modern medicine. Epilepsy, a disorder characterized by recurrent, unprovoked seizures, disrupts the harmonious symphony of the brain, casting a shadow over the lives of millions. In the realm of drug-resistant epilepsy, where conventional pharmacological therapies falter, the quest to understand the origins and propagation of seizures becomes even more critical. MRI, with its ability to generate detailed images of the brain's anatomy and function, has emerged as an indispensable tool in this quest. By employing a symphony of imaging sequences, each attuned to a specific aspect of brain structure or physiology, multimodal MRI offers a multi-dimensional perspective on the epileptogenic brain. From the exquisite anatomical detail of high-resolution T1-weighted imaging to the subtle microstructural changes revealed by diffusion-weighted imaging (DWI), each sequence contributes a unique brushstroke to the canvas of the epileptogenic landscape. Our findings, akin to an artist unveiling a masterpiece, paint a vivid and nuanced picture of the diverse tapestry of MRI abnormalities that can manifest in DRE. The striking observation that a substantial 82% of patients exhibited detectable MRI abnormalities underscores the sensitivity of this imaging modality in identifying potential epileptogenic foci. This high detection rate serves as a testament to the power of MRI in peering beyond the surface and revealing the hidden scars and subtle alterations that may underlie seizure generation. Among the myriad of MRI findings, hippocampal sclerosis emerged as the most prevalent, affecting 34% of our patient cohort. This observation resonates with the broader literature on DRE, where hippocampal sclerosis has been consistently recognized as a major contributor to seizure intractability, particularly in temporal lobe epilepsy. The characteristic atrophy, loss of internal architecture, and increased T2/FLAIR signal intensity in the hippocampus serve as telltale signs of this pathology, guiding clinicians towards a potential epicenter of epileptic activity. Focal cortical dysplasia, a fascinating malformation of cortical development, was the second most common abnormality detected in our study, affecting 26% of patients. This intricate lesion, often manifesting as subtle blurring of the gray-white matter junction or abnormal cortical thickening, can be elusive on conventional imaging, requiring meticulous scrutiny of high-resolution MRI sequences. The detection of focal cortical dysplasia in a significant proportion of our patients highlights the importance of

employing advanced imaging techniques to uncover these subtle but critical contributors to drug resistance. Gliosis, a silent witness to prior brain insults or inflammation, was also observed in a substantial 18% of patients. This finding suggests a potential role for acquired brain injury or neuroinflammatory processes in the pathogenesis of DRE. The increased T2/FLAIR signal intensity associated with gliosis serves as a beacon, illuminating areas of potential epileptogenicity that might otherwise remain hidden. The heterogeneity of MRI findings in our study further extended to less common abnormalities, such as cavernous angioma and low-grade glioma, reminding us of the diverse tapestry of structural lesions that can underlie DRE. These observations underscore the importance of maintaining a broad differential diagnosis and employing a comprehensive imaging approach to capture the full spectrum of potential epileptogenic substrates. While our findings resonate with global trends in DRE, they also offer a unique lens through which to view the epileptogenic landscape in the Indian context. The high prevalence of hippocampal sclerosis in our cohort echoes observations from other Indian studies, suggesting a potential regional predilection for this particular pathology. This intriguing observation raises questions about the potential influence of genetic, environmental, or infectious factors on the etiology of DRE in India, beckoning further exploration and research. Furthermore, the detection of less common abnormalities, such as cavernous angioma and low-grade glioma, serves as a reminder of the diverse etiological landscape of epilepsy in India. Neuroinfections, tuberculomas, and neurocysticercosis, prevalent in this region, can also contribute to the development of DRE, necessitating a nuanced and comprehensive approach to diagnosis and management. While conventional MRI sequences provide a valuable foundation for visualizing the structural abnormalities associated with DRE, advanced MRI techniques, such as DWI and SWI, add another layer of illumination, revealing subtle nuances that might otherwise remain shrouded in darkness. In our study, these advanced techniques unveiled subtle abnormalities in 20% of patients that were not readily apparent on standard imaging. This finding underscores the incremental value of DWI and SWI in enhancing the sensitivity of EZ localization, particularly in cases where conventional MRI might yield equivocal results. DWI, by probing the microscopic motion of water molecules, offers a glimpse into the intricate world of tissue microstructure. Subtle alterations in diffusion properties, often invisible on conventional MRI, can be indicative of cortical dysplasia, gliosis, or other pathological processes associated with epileptogenicity. SWI, with its exquisite sensitivity to blood products and other paramagnetic substances, acts as a detective, uncovering microhemorrhages or calcifications that may serve as telltale signs of an epileptogenic lesion. The synergistic combination of DWI and SWI with conventional MRI sequences creates a powerful multimodal imaging armamentarium that can illuminate the epileptogenic landscape with unprecedented clarity and precision.[11-14]

While the global burden of epilepsy is substantial, the challenges associated with its management are particularly pronounced in developing countries like India. Access to specialized healthcare and advanced diagnostic tools may be limited, and socio-economic factors can further complicate the picture. The prevalence of epilepsy in India is estimated to be around 5.59 per 1000 population, with a significant proportion of these cases exhibiting drug resistance. This places a considerable strain on the healthcare system and underscores the urgent need for effective strategies to address DRE in the Indian context. One of the striking observations from our study is the high prevalence of hippocampal sclerosis (HS) in the Indian cohort of DRE patients. This finding aligns with observations from other Indian studies, suggesting a potential regional predilection for this particular pathology. HS, characterized by atrophy and distinctive changes in the hippocampus, is a well-recognized cause of temporal lobe epilepsy and is strongly associated with drug resistance. The reasons behind the increased prevalence of HS in India remain an area of active investigation. Several factors could

contribute to this phenomenon. Genetic predisposition might play a role, with certain genetic variants potentially increasing susceptibility to HS in the Indian population. Environmental factors, such as exposure to neurotoxins or early-life insults, could also contribute to the development of HS. Additionally, infectious diseases, including neurocysticercosis and tuberculosis, which are more prevalent in India, might lead to hippocampal damage and subsequent epileptogenesis. Understanding the specific factors that contribute to the increased prevalence of HS in India is crucial for developing targeted prevention and treatment strategies. Further research is needed to explore the genetic, environmental, and infectious underpinnings of HS in this population. This knowledge could potentially lead to the identification of biomarkers for early detection and the development of novel therapeutic interventions aimed at preventing or mitigating hippocampal damage. The Indian landscape of epilepsy is not only characterized by a high prevalence of HS but also by a remarkable diversity of etiologies. Neuroinfections, tuberculomas, and neurocysticercosis, endemic in many parts of India, can leave lasting scars on the brain, predisposing individuals to the development of epilepsy. These infectious agents can trigger inflammatory responses, disrupt neuronal networks, and lead to structural abnormalities that serve as fertile ground for seizure generation. Our study also detected other less common abnormalities, such as cavernous angioma and low-grade glioma, further highlighting the heterogeneity of structural lesions that can be associated with DRE in India. This diversity underscores the importance of maintaining a broad differential diagnosis when evaluating patients with DRE in this region. A comprehensive approach, encompassing a detailed clinical history, thorough neurological examination, and advanced neuroimaging techniques, is essential for unraveling the complex etiological tapestry of DRE in India. The heterogeneity of epilepsy etiologies in India poses a unique challenge for clinicians tasked with diagnosing and managing DRE. The absence of a clear-cut diagnostic algorithm necessitates a nuanced and individualized approach, tailored to the specific clinical presentation and risk factors of each patient. Multimodal MRI, with its ability to visualize a wide spectrum of structural abnormalities, plays a pivotal role in navigating this diagnostic maze. By providing detailed anatomical and functional information, MRI can help differentiate between various etiologies, guide further investigations, and inform treatment decisions. The integration of MRI findings with clinical and electrophysiological data is crucial for achieving an accurate diagnosis and developing a personalized treatment plan. The unique landscape of DRE in India has important implications for its management. The high prevalence of HS suggests that early identification and targeted treatment of this pathology could potentially reduce the burden of drug resistance. This might involve the use of neuroprotective agents or anti-inflammatory therapies aimed at preventing or mitigating hippocampal damage. The diverse etiological landscape necessitates a multipronged approach to treatment, addressing not only the seizures but also the underlying cause. In cases of infectious etiologies, appropriate antimicrobial therapy is crucial for controlling the infection and preventing further brain damage. Surgical intervention might be considered in cases where a well-defined epileptogenic lesion is identified and complete resection is feasible.[15-17]

In the realm of epilepsy surgery, the quest to precisely delineate the epileptogenic zone (EZ) has driven relentless innovation in neuroimaging. While conventional MRI sequences, such as T1-weighted, T2-weighted, and FLAIR, provide a valuable foundation for visualizing structural abnormalities, they may sometimes fall short of capturing the subtle nuances that can betray the presence of an epileptogenic focus. This is where advanced MRI techniques, particularly DWI and SWI, emerge as invaluable allies, illuminating the shadows and revealing hidden clues that can guide surgical decision-making. DWI, a sophisticated MRI technique that measures the diffusion of water molecules within brain tissue, offers a unique window into the microscopic world of the epileptic brain. By quantifying the movement of water molecules, DWI can detect subtle alterations in tissue microstructure

that may elude detection on standard imaging. These microstructural changes can be indicative of a variety of pathological processes associated with epileptogenicity, including cortical dysplasia, gliosis, and subtle neuronal loss or disorganization. In the context of cortical dysplasia, a common cause of drug-resistant epilepsy, DWI can reveal subtle blurring of the gray-white matter junction or areas of abnormal diffusion within the cortex, even in the absence of overt structural abnormalities on conventional MRI. This enhanced sensitivity allows for the identification of epileptogenic foci that might otherwise remain hidden, enabling more targeted surgical resection and potentially improving seizure outcomes. Similarly, in cases of gliosis, where scarring or injury has occurred in the brain, DWI can detect subtle changes in diffusion properties that reflect the underlying tissue alterations. This can be particularly valuable in patients with a history of head trauma, infection, or prior surgery, where gliosis might contribute to the development of drug-resistant epilepsy. Beyond cortical dysplasia and gliosis, DWI has also shown promise in detecting subtle changes associated with other epileptogenic pathologies, such as hippocampal sclerosis and tumors. By providing a glimpse into the microscopic architecture of the brain, DWI adds a crucial layer of information to the multimodal MRI evaluation, enhancing the accuracy of EZ localization and guiding surgical decision-making. SWI, another advanced MRI technique, acts as a detective's lens, meticulously searching for subtle clues that might betray the presence of an epileptogenic lesion. By exploiting the magnetic susceptibility differences between tissues, SWI is exquisitely sensitive to blood products, calcium deposits, and other paramagnetic substances. This allows for the visualization of microhemorrhages, calcifications, or other subtle markers of epileptogenic activity that might be invisible on conventional MRI. In the context of epilepsy, SWI has proven particularly valuable in detecting cavernous malformations, and subtle vascular lesions that can be a source of seizures. These malformations, often characterized by clusters of dilated blood vessels, can be challenging to identify on conventional MRI, especially when they are small or located in deep brain regions. SWI, with its ability to detect even minute amounts of blood products, can readily reveal these lesions, guiding surgical planning and potentially preventing future hemorrhagic complications. Similarly, SWI can be instrumental in identifying cortical microdysgenesis, a subtle form of cortical dysplasia characterized by microscopic abnormalities in cortical lamination. These abnormalities, often undetectable on conventional MRI, can be visualized on SWI as subtle alterations in signal intensity, providing crucial evidence for the presence of an epileptogenic focus. Beyond cavernous malformations and cortical microdysgenesis, SWI has also shown promise in detecting other subtle markers of epileptogenicity, such as hemosiderin deposits associated with prior microhemorrhages or calcifications within tumors. By providing a unique perspective on the brain's microenvironment, SWI complements conventional MRI sequences, enhancing the detection of epileptogenic lesions and refining the delineation of the EZ. The true power of advanced imaging techniques like DWI and SWI lies not in their isolation but in their synergistic combination with conventional MRI sequences. By integrating the anatomical detail of T1-weighted imaging, the tissue contrast of T2-weighted imaging, the lesion conspicuity of FLAIR, the microstructural insights of DWI, and the subtle lesion detection of SWI, multimodal MRI creates a comprehensive and multi-dimensional portrait of the epileptogenic brain. This multimodal approach allows for a more nuanced and holistic understanding of the epileptogenic zone, encompassing not only its structural characteristics but also its functional and microstructural properties. This wealth of information empowers clinicians to make more informed decisions regarding surgical candidacy, the extent of resection, and the potential for seizure freedom.[18-20]

4. Conclusion

This study underscores the invaluable role of multimodal MRI in unraveling the complexities of the epileptogenic landscape in patients with drug-resistant epilepsy in India. The high detection rate of MRI abnormalities, the incremental value of advanced

imaging techniques, and the strong concordance with EEG findings highlight the potential of MRI to significantly enhance the accuracy of pre-surgical evaluation and guide effective surgical interventions. By shedding light on the structural and functional underpinnings of drug resistance, this study paves the way for more personalized and targeted treatment strategies, ultimately improving the lives of individuals grappling with this challenging condition. Further research is warranted to explore the nuances of multimodal MRI in diverse patient populations and to integrate emerging imaging technologies into the diagnostic and therapeutic armamentarium for epilepsy.

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