

## **The Osteopathic Approach to Seizures**

*by Viola Frymann, D.O., F.A.A.O., F.C.A.*

<http://www.osteopathiccenter.org/seizures.html>

Seizures may occur at any stage in life from newborn to old age. But the etiology or underlying cause may vary from patient to patient. Rare causes are organic brain diseases.

For the child who develops seizures such conditions may be ruled out by electro-encephalogram, (EEG) computerized tomography (C.T.) scan or magnetic resonance imaging (M.R.I.).

Another causative factor may be trauma, a head injury following a car accident, bicycle accident, football or other high speed sports mishaps, a fall from a tree, or even an upper bunk especially if there is a door knob or hard table obstructing the fall and causing a focal blow to the head.

Such injuries will be identified in the course of history-taking and confirmed in many instances by X-ray (C.T. or M.R.I.). A far more common traumatic factor, and far less easily identified injury may have occurred during the process of birth.

The nine months of pregnancy is arranged anatomically and physiologically to provide the utmost protection to the developing baby within the mother's abdomen.

The process of labor whereby the baby is delivered into this world is also designed to bring the baby into this world without injury.

However modern "civilization" with high heeled shoes, refined, processed flavored, colored foods, chemical solutions in place of wholesome healthy drinks of spring water, exposure to toxic chemicals in the workplace as well as the stresses on the job may all bring detrimental influences to the developing baby within mother's body.

The period of pregnancy may be a healthy, happy, joyous experience until the expected date of delivery draws near. Labor begins, or at least the contractions seem like labor. Contractions continue, somewhat erratically for a few hours or days only to reveal themselves as false labor. The baby in the womb has been compressed by the uterine contractions on his buttocks and sacrum (the large bone at the base of the spine), and his head may have been compressed as it was pushed into the pelvis before the birth canal opened to permit an easy passage.

On the other hand there may have been no false labor, and the real labor begins according to expectation. Then mother experiences severe back pain, which suggests that the baby has turned face forward instead of face backward.

Progress is retarded because this position makes passage through the birth canal more difficult. This is but one of the possible traumatic events that can occur during the birth process and affect the delicate musculoskeletal mechanism of the baby.

Perhaps you can see that your baby has a crooked or asymmetrical head, perhaps your baby throws his head back forcibly and screams. This is like a cramp in the neck, and it hurts! But these are indications that the delicate nervous system within the skull and spine has suffered some degree of trauma.

There are many degrees and varieties of trauma that may occur during the birth process. Ten percent of babies may suffer visible, obvious trauma. Ten percent of babies may be perfect with free physiological motion and function throughout. But about 80% of new born babies may have less visible, but nevertheless significant strain factors within their body mechanism.

Some of these produce microscopic injuries to areas of the brain which may manifest exteriorly as jerking of muscles, spasms in parts of the body with or without changes in consciousness, and even full seizures affecting the whole body.

Other children may vomit after many feeds or they may have been slow to learn to suck effectively, they may cry inconsolably, their muscle tone may be markedly increased, and tense or limp or flaccid. There are other signs that may appear later in childhood that indicate that microscopic injury may have occurred during the birth process, but in areas of the brain that do not come into full function at the time of birth.

The osteopathic physician is trained to identify these subtle changes in the musculoskeletal system and apply gentle manipulative skills to correct them.

In many instances the neurological problems can be profoundly benefited by such treatment. The earlier in life the treatment can be given the better the results.

The magnitude of the brain injury is also a factor in the degree of response. When a child is diagnosed as having a seizure disorder various diagnostic tests will be performed and in many instances anticonvulsant medication will be prescribed. Progress under osteopathic treatment will be measured by reduction in intensity and frequency of seizures and in positive changes in the EEG.

However the objective of treatment regardless of the intensity or severity of the problem is to enable this child to function at the maximum of his/her potential.