

# Retraining and Control Therapy

The aim was to conduct a pilot [randomized controlled trial](#) of a novel cognitive behaviorally based intervention for pediatric [Psychogenic Nonepileptic Seizures](#)(PNES) called [Retraining and Control Therapy](#) (ReACT).

**Methods:** Participants were randomized to receive either eight sessions of ReACT or supportive therapy, and participants completed follow-up visits at 7- and 60-days posttreatment. The primary outcome measure was PNES frequency at 7-days posttreatment. Eligibility criteria included children with video-EEG confirmed PNES and participant/parent or guardian willingness to participate in treatment. Exclusion criteria included substance use, psychosis, and severe intellectual disability. Forty-two patients were assessed for eligibility and 32 were randomized. ReACT aimed to retrain classically conditioned, involuntary PNES by targeting catastrophic symptom expectations and a low sense of control over symptoms using principles of habit reversal. Supportive therapy was based on the assumption that relief from stress or problems can be achieved by discussion with a therapist.

**Results:** Twenty-nine participants (Mage = 15.1 years, SDage = 2.5; 72.2% female; 57.1% Caucasian, 28.6% African American) completed 7-days postprocedures. For PNES frequency, the Wilcoxon Rank Sum test statistic was 273.5 yielding a normal approximation of  $Z = 4.725$  ( $P < 0.0001$ ), indicating a significant improvement in PNES frequency for ReACT at 7-days posttreatment compared to supportive therapy. Participants with PNES in the 7-days posttreatment were removed from the study for additional treatment, resulting in no 60-day follow-up data for supportive therapy.

**Interpretation:** ReACT resulted in significantly greater PNES reduction than supportive therapy, with 100% of patients experiencing no PNES in 7 days after ReACT. Additionally, 82% remained PNES-free for 60 days after ReACT. <sup>1)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup>

Fobian AD, Long DM, Szaflarski JP. Retraining and control therapy for pediatric psychogenic non-epileptic seizures [published online ahead of print, 2020 Aug 3]. Ann Clin Transl Neurol. 2020;10.1002/acn3.51138. doi:10.1002/acn3.51138

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