

Ictal lid movements - blinks and lid saccades

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Objective: to describe unique cases of eyelid movements seen in epilepsy

Two types of lid movements, lid saccades and blinks, have discrete kinematic properties and physiology. These differences are reflected in distinct phenomenology of disorders affecting their neural substrate. Proof of this principle was seen in two cases, one with parietal eyefield epileptiform discharges and the other with temporal lobe seizures. The lid movements in the patient with epileptiform discharges in the eyefield were rhythmic, yoked, and had rapid upward component that instantaneously followed slow downward drift. These cyclic movements strikingly resembled nystagmus, but unlike typical eye nystagmus, the rapid upward component was pathological and seemed to involve saccadic mechanism. We suggest terms “ictal lid saccade” or “ictal lid nystagmus” to describe such phenomenology. In contrast, the patient with temporal lobe seizures had ipsilateral lid movements with rapid downward trajectories resembling reflex or spontaneous blinks. The term “ictal blink” is appropriate for this phenomenology.