

QUIZ

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Paint the town purple – that’s what one Hong Kong charity hopes the community will do to help raise awareness of epilepsy this month.

Purple – lavender, to be precise – is the colour that’s universally associated with the chronic neurological disorder, in which sufferers have recurrent seizures. Organised by Enlighten-Action for Epilepsy, the campaign coincides with the city’s Epilepsy Awareness Month as well as the organisation’s 10th anniversary.

About 65,000 people have the condition in Hong Kong, says Enlighten, “but we hardly hear about them or the condition, as most of them find coping with the social challenges a lot more difficult than living with their epilepsy”. Sufferers often live with the fear of discrimination, seclusion and community prejudice. There are many possible causes of epilepsy, although about half of all seizures have no known cause.



Purple is the symbolic colour for epilepsy awareness

Mystique and misconceptions have contributed to the stigma. So this month, Enlighten hopes to work with retail outlets, schools, NGOs, companies, associations and the public to help spread awareness and knowledge of epilepsy by putting up posters, handing out brochures and collecting donations. More ideas at www.enlightenhk.org. To get involved, e-mail purple@enlightenhk.org or call 2820 0111.

Meanwhile, test yourself on how much you know about epilepsy here with this test.

1. According to the first population-based epidemiological survey of epilepsy in Hong Kong, published in *Seizure: European Journal of Epilepsy*, in 2008, the crude prevalence of active epilepsy in the territory is

- a. 1.36 per 1,000
- b. 3.94 per 1,000
- c. 4.68 per 1,000

2. Which of the following could trigger a seizure in epilepsy patients?

- a. Loud noises and flashing lights
- b. Illnesses with high fever
- c. Playing mahjong

3. When a person is having a seizure, what should you put in their mouth?

- a. A spoon
- b. A finger
- c. Nothing

4. Epilepsy can be treated with

- a. Special diet
- b. Medication
- c. Surgery

Answers: 1. b; 2. All are correct; 3. c (best thing is to protect the person from injury, cushion the head and remain till the seizure ends); 4. All are correct.