

Epilepsy sufferers will one day live without seizures, says expert

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A leading epilepsy expert at Royal Holloway, University of London, has said there is a pressing need for new and more effective treatments that would make it possible for all sufferers to live seizure free.

On Purple Day today (Wednesday 26 March), a global epilepsy awareness day, Professor Robin Williams said many [epilepsy patients](#)' quality of life could be significantly improved thanks to advances currently being made in treatments.

"Epilepsy can have a devastating effect on people and their families and there are a range of serious side-effects associated with current treatments", said Professor Williams, from the School of Biological Sciences at Royal Holloway. "I believe that research represents the best hope of finding a cure for epilepsy and eventually we will develop new treatments so that no-one will have to experience seizures."

Last year, research by Professor Williams, in collaboration with Professor Matthew Walker, unlocked the secret to [valproic acid](#), the most commonly prescribed treatment for epilepsy. The

research identified how the drug works to block seizures in epilepsy sufferers, a fact that had remained a mystery for almost 50 years.

However, despite important breakthroughs in current treatments, the academic has said that further advances must also be made to offer medication with fewer side-effects.

He said: "There are a range of serious side-effects associated with valproic acid, including birth defects, tremors, kidney problems and alopecia. Developing more effective treatments would have a huge effect on the lives of those not responding well to current medication."

Around 600,000 people in the UK are living with [epilepsy](#), and approximately 87 people are diagnosed with the condition every day.

Provided by Royal Holloway, University of London

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