



Current status of stroke care in Nepal

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Stroke has been consistent in being one of the leading causes of death globally in last 15 years. Amongst the non-communicable diseases, recently stroke has unfortunately won the battle with cardiovascular causes in killing people from low-income countries.^[1,2] In this 21st century, where medical sciences has taken a great leap in terms of technical advances and production of trained medical professionals to handle many communicable and non-communicable diseases globally, Nepal's medical sciences, in particular Neuroscience including stroke medicine, is still in its infancy. Medical organizations and professionals undoubtedly are putting their constant effort in raising and maintaining the standard of basic care in stroke which Nepalese were deprived of few years ago. Few of the organizations, mostly situated in Kathmandu valley are heading towards advanced stroke treatment. One of the most important aspects of the advanced stroke care constitute stroke thrombolysis, which used to be a dream about a decade ago^[3] has been gradually picked up by major institutions viz. National Institute of Neurological and Allied Sciences, Grande International Hospital, Annapurna Institute of Neurological and Allied Sciences, Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital and Norvic International Hospital. It is very encouraging to know that Manipal College of Medical Sciences-Teaching Hospital (outside Kathmandu valley) have thrombolysed two cases of ischemic stroke so far in collaboration with National Institute of Neurological and Allied Sciences. What we believe is the sudden spurring of stroke thrombolysis in Nepal is related to the dedicated and effective neurology training programs being started recently in Nepal attracting many young physicians in the field of neuroscience. It is observed that the process of stroke thrombolysis has been not only effectively supported by Nepalese neurologists being trained abroad and working in Nepal but also the nurses working in this field. In the year 2016, first evidence on stroke thrombolysis in Nepal was published from the National Institute of Neurological and Allied Sciences,^[4] which gives the insight into the real status of the beginning of stroke thrombolysis from this country.

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However, this is not the end of the story but just a beginning of the advanced stroke care services in Nepal. And the entire Nepalese population have started visualizing the ray of hope at the end of the tunnel in terms of the availability of more advanced stroke care like stroke interventions in near future. It is to be mentioned that the first intra-arterial thrombolysis was performed in National Institute of Neurological and Allied Sciences in a case of posterior circulation stroke and the patient survived and was discharged with good outcome with modified Rankin Scale (mRS) of 1.

So far, there is no report about thrombectomy from Nepal. However, this area needs a huge exploration and implementation because of the fact that most of the patient may reach late to the hospital because of the geographical hindrances.

Let's hope that stroke care in Nepal will advance soon before we lose many people or this sinister render them disabled.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The author is chief of Neurology at National Institute of Neurological and Allied Sciences and President of Nepal Stroke Association. The author declares that there are no competing interests regarding the publication of this paper.

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