

Knowledge about Stroke and Its Management among Hypertensive Patients Attending Medical Clinic at Teaching Hospital Batticaloa, Sri Lanka

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Stroke is a worldwide health problem and a major contributor to mortality and disability in both developing and developed countries. It is the third commonest cause of death worldwide and the single largest cause of adult disability. Awareness of stroke is a major part of preventing the prevalence and complications of stroke. The recognition of stroke symptoms by the public and activation of the Emergency Medical Services are the most important factors in initiating pre-hospital stroke care. This study was conducted to assess the knowledge regarding stroke among hypertensive patients who were attending the medical clinic at Teaching Hospital Batticaloa. A cross sectional descriptive study was conducted for one year among 269 hypertensive patients who were attending medical clinic. After obtaining written consent, data were collected according to systematic sampling through a pre-designed and pre-tested interviewer administered questionnaire. Statistical Package of Social Science 19 was used for analyzing the data. The descriptive analysis was employed and the association of knowledge with demographical factors was assessed through Chi square test. Only 5.6 % hypertensive patients (n=15) had good knowledge, while many of them (n=151) 56.1% had adequate knowledge regarding stroke. The most common risk factors identified were hypertension (79.2%) and hyperlipidemia (40.1%). Sudden numbness (85.1%) and weakness or paralysis of face, arms, and limbs (67.3%) were the commonly identified signs and symptoms. There was a significant association ($p<0.05$) between the knowledge of stroke and the following background characteristics; place of living, education, occupation, income, duration of hypertensive clinic follow ups and family history of stroke. In conclusion, knowledge on stroke among the patients was satisfactory in many aspects.

Keywords: Hypertension, Stroke, Knowledge