

How to cope with stroke

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vessel walls. This condition is called atherosclerosis. Hemorrhagic stroke results from a weakened vessel that ruptures and bleeds into the surrounding brain structure. The blood accumulates and compresses the surrounding brain tissue.

Transient ischemic attacks

Transient ischemic attacks (TIA) are minor or warning strokes. In case of TIA, conditions indicative of an ischemic stroke are present and the typical stroke warning signs develop.

However, the obstruction (blood clot) occurs for a short time and tends to resolve itself through normal mechanisms.

Even though the symptoms disappear after a short time, TIAs are strong indicators of a possible major stroke. Steps should be taken immediately to prevent a stroke.

Symptoms of stroke

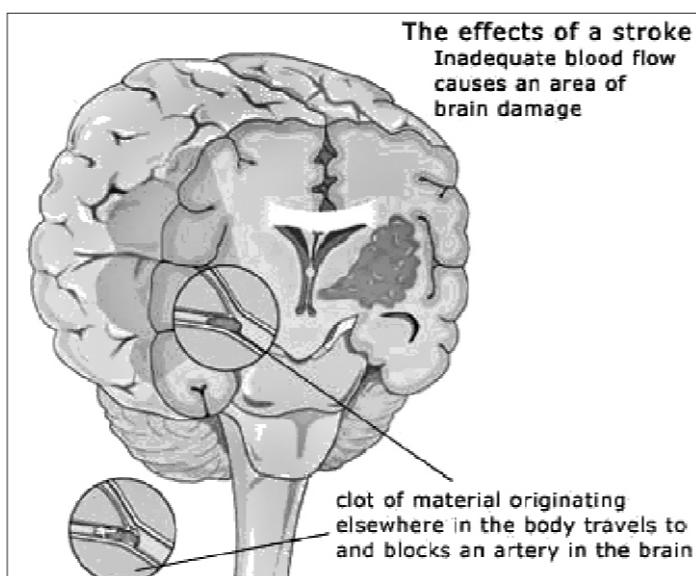
• Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body

• Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding

• Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes

• Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination

• Sudden severe headache, vomiting, loss of consciousness



Diagnostic tests

Diagnostic tests examine how the brain looks, works and gets its blood supply. They can outline the injured brain area. Most of them are safe and painless.

CT scan (Computed Tomography) is a key imaging test. It is usually one of the first tests given to patients suspected of stroke.

CT test results give valuable information about the cause of stroke and the location and extent of brain injury.

MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) uses a large magnetic

testing and duplex scanning. These tests give detailed information about the condition of arteries.

Another blood flow test is a medical procedure called angiography (arteriography or arteriogram). Special dyes are injected into the blood vessels and an X-ray is taken. Angiography gives a picture of the blood flow through the vessels. This allows the size and location of blockages to be evaluated.

Treatments

Antiplatelets/Anticoagulants

Antiplatelets (aspirin like drugs) agents play an important role in preventing stroke.

Carotid endarterectomy

Carotid endarterectomy is a procedure in which blood vessel blockage is surgically removed from the carotid artery.

Angioplasty/Stents: Sometimes balloon angioplasty and stents are used in intervention procedure.

Surgical intervention

For hemorrhagic stroke, surgical treatment is often recommended which includes surgical evacuation of a haematoma, placement of a metal clip at the base (neck) of the aneurysm or to remove the abnormal vessels comprising an Arteriovenous Malformation (AVM) by Endovascular Procedures, e.g., "coils".

Endovascular procedures are

less invasive and involve the use of a catheter introduced through a major artery in the leg or arm, guided to the aneurysm or AVM where it deposits a mechanical agent, such as a coil, to prevent rupture.

Common effects of stroke

Every stroke is individual, but there are a number of common ways in which stroke can affect someone. The disability from stroke depends on the size, extent and area of the brain affected.

Stroke patients can have some disability such as motor, language dysfunction, swallowing problems, sensory deficit, visual disturbance, incoordination, behavioral disturbance etc.

Comprehensive rehabilitation which includes physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy needs to be continued following stroke.

Maximum recovery following stroke occurs in the first 3-4 months which then gradually slows down. Regular follow up by the concerned consultant neurologist is very much essential so that the recovery is monitored and also the associated risk factors are controlled which prevents the chance of recurrence of stroke.

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The writer is a Consultant and Head of the Department of Neurology of Apollo Hospitals Dhaka.



Did You Know

Stressed-out types at risk for memory problems

REUTERS, Chicago

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People who are often stressed out or depressed are far more likely to develop memory problems than those with sunnier dispositions, U.S. researchers said in a finding that sheds light on early predictors of Alzheimer's disease.

They said those who most often are anxious or depressed were 40 times more likely to develop mild cognitive impairment, a form of memory loss that is often a transitional stage between normal aging and dementia.

"Not only are these individuals losing cognition, but they are showing many of the changes in the brain that are associated with Alzheimer's disease," said Robert Wilson, whose study appears in the journal *Neurology*.

"This isn't a measure of stress, but of the response to stress," he said.

The latest research suggests that chronic stress may harm parts of the brain responsible for responding to stress — an area that is also associated with memory, he said.



"We now see that chronic distress is related to the first



Aerobic exercise may reverse signs of heart failure

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The positive changes occurred even though the patients were already on drugs proven to benefit heart function, Haykowsky's team observed. In fact, they found that the magnitude of improvement in heart function was similar to that achieved with standard drugs.

On the other hand, results of strength training, with or without aerobic training were inconclusive.

In an editorial, Dr. Stanley A. Rubin, at the UCLA School of Medicine, urges caution before starting heart failure patients on an exercise training programme.

Rubin outlines the considerations to be taken into account when starting a patient on an exercise training program — including pre-training evaluation, as well as the type, degree, and venue of exercise training.

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Source: *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*

GSK to donate to WHO pandemic flu stockpile

Gloax Smith Kline (GSK) announced its intention to donate 50 million doses of H5N1 adjuvanted pre-pandemic influenza vaccine to the World Health Organisation in support of its stockpile initiative, says a press release.

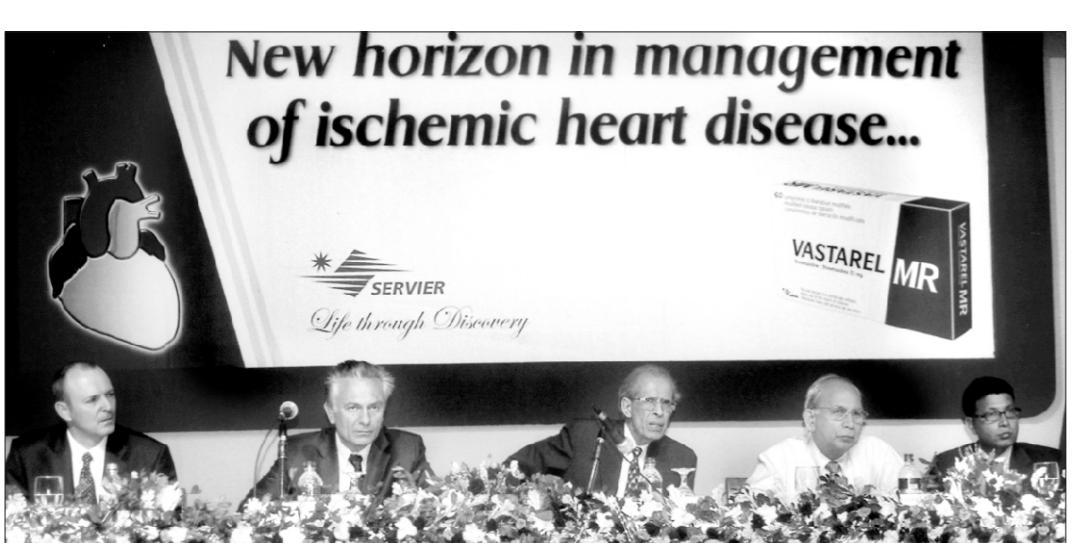
The donation will help establish a much needed stockpile of pre-pandemic vaccines that can be distributed to the world's poorest countries at short notice by the WHO. Delivered over a three year period, it will provide enough doses of vaccine for 25 million people at injections per person.

As the WHO has made clear, pandemic influenza poses a serious global public health threat with substantial estimated morbidity and mortality. The WHO has expressed its desire to create an international stockpile of H5N1 pre-pandemic vaccines, a strategy which received the endorsement of the 193 member states in attendance at the World Health Assembly in Geneva last month.

In addition to the donation, the company confirmed its intention to provide additional doses of its H5N1 adjuvanted vaccine at preferential prices to the WHO for GAVI-eligible countries following the necessary regulatory approvals. GSK intends to provide the vaccine to middle and low-income countries at preferential prices reflecting individual countries income level.

Jean-Pierre Garnier, CEO of GSK said, "An outbreak of pandemic flu could have a serious devastating effect on some of the poorest countries on our planet. As a healthcare company, GSK takes seriously its responsibility to ensure access for the world's poorest people to our medicines and vaccines. This participation enables us to play a part in the WHO's efforts to coordinate a more comprehensive global solution to this potential healthcare crisis."

New horizon in management of ischemic heart disease...



Servier Bangladesh Operations has launched Trimetazidine, an effective antianginal agent in modified formulation named Vastarel MR. On the launching ceremony, Professor Mario Marzilli from Italy discussed the new approach of treatment of stable angina with this drug at a local hotel in the city. Interventional cardiologist of BSMU, Professor M Nazrul Islam presented a paper on management of ischemic heart disease while National Professor Brig.(Rtd) Abdul Malik chaired the session.



Sanofi-Aventis Bangladesh Ltd. organised a 'Meet the Experts' session in the name of 'Diabetes and Hypertension: Control does matter' at a local hotel in the capital for the diabetic and cardiac patients who need counselling. Eminent diabetologists and cardiologists of the country answered different queries of the patients. Patients also shared their own experiences with each other and got inspired to follow healthy lifestyles.