

# **STROKE:**

**Eighty percent of the people might recover some ability to walk.**

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Stroke happens that fast and unexpectedly. There are lightning strikes in the form of stroke



happening around the world at least once per minute. Millions of people have suffered this disability. Of most concern is the recent increase in the number of young patients. Absence of certain people in the usual places of gatherings leaves us a room to know about of these persons. Upon a closer inquiry, woeful stories are told about them. They are either dead or bed ridden due to stroke. No doubt, it is as a result of a wide spread disease

connected with neuropathy. Not only do old men but also youngsters fall prey to this dangerous disease. At a time when life expectancy of the people of India is increasing considerably thanks to the enhanced health awareness, a certain parts of India are still unaffected by the progress achieved by the health sector. A brief analysis on the stroke affected persons will help bring to the fore some facts about the causes and effects of such disease. Undoubtedly, we will understand that the benefit of health education has failed to reach every nook and corner of India. A close look at the patients of Thoothoor region (number goes above 50) will further prove this.

I am not an expert to provide you with the following information which can normally be given by a medical practitioner. Yet, on the basis of an intensive study I have undertaken, I could furnish this data about the topic. I could hear the feeble voices of the patients when I met them in their houses. A few of them were met, while they were walking slowly along the street. I would sit with them and hear the story associated with the disease.

## **Symptoms:**

As for the symptoms, a reliable source reveals that the patient may experience confusion. He may have difficulty understanding speech. Sudden numbness, weakness or paralysis may develop in his face, arm or leg, especially on one side of his body. In such a situation, he may try to raise both his arms over his head at the same time. If one arm begins to fall, he may be having a stroke. Similarly, one side of his mouth may droop when he tries to smile. He may suddenly have blurred or blackened vision in one or both eyes. A sudden, severe headache, which may be accompanied by vomiting, dizziness or altered consciousness, may indicate he is having a stroke. He may stumble or experience sudden dizziness, loss of balance or loss of coordination.

## **Causes:**

A stroke occurs when the blood supply to the brain is interrupted or reduced. This deprives the brain of oxygen and nutrients, which can cause the brain cells to die. A stroke may be caused by a blocked artery or the leaking or bursting of a blood vessel.

## **Fast Food:**

Expert can very well give a vivid picture about the factors responsible for such a disease. I too lost my beloved father on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016. He fell ill after he had attended a wedding party. It is presumed that he may have consumed fat food which aggravated the situation. It is to be admitted that my family members who were present at that time were having least knowledge about what they should do immediately. We are not supposed to wait to see the going away of the symptoms. Every minute counts. The longer a stroke goes untreated, the greater the potential for brain damage and disability. It is unfortunate that my father was admitted 20 hours after the symptom had appeared. Such is the case with so many patients who are bed ridden at the moment.



It's sad to hear that people's dependence on fast food is on the rise now. Restaurants selling fast food are overflowed with customers. Very often, long queue is seen in front of them. Shouldn't it be as a result of the change in life style? Gone are the days when people used such restaurants for emergency. The fishermen find no other way except to depend on such foods in their work places. The circumstances in their work places may have led them depend on fast food. Why can't they give up such practices when they come home? Unaware of the repercussions of this dependence, they flock in. Is modernity another reason?

### **Sufferings and Hardship:**

Having met a few patients in their homes, I gathered a lot of information pertaining to the cause of the disease. In a certain house, both the father and mother are suffering due to this disease. It is pity to hear the woeful story. The aftermath of this catastrophe is even worse. At this old age, they look very difficult to move out of their bed. The care givers of adult stroke look tired of nursing stroke survivors. A few get adjusted when it becomes their routine work. Having understood that it is the first and foremost duty of the children to nurse their ailing parents, they take it as sportive. Uncared patients' condition looks very pathetic. Upon further inquiry, it is learnt that there is none to look after them. Beds are converted in to toilets. When I visited another patient, I could notice tears started trickling. The body language revealed that his heart ached to speak and share his feelings. But he was helpless. The care givers give up their entities. They don't voice their displeasure. To their dismal, they abandon all their family functions. Sometimes it looks that the ailing patients depend each other for help.

A patient whom I met recently narrated the way he got struck of this disease. He is a fisherman from Thoothoor. While fishing in the deep sea in Kerala, he found the symptoms. He had to rush to the shore to be admitted in the hospital. As he found no specialist in the fish landing centre, Azhikal, near Kozhikode, he was taken to Cosmos hospital Trivandrum. By the time he reached the hospital, about 16 hours had passed. No doctor attended him during these hours. Neither the patients nor the care givers know about the fact that the patient is to consult the doctor within two to three hours. In this case, the damage caused is immense and exemplary. He says that there were about 16 blocks in the veins that pass through the brain. It is true that all the 16 blocks weren't there initially. If he had been given a proper medical care on time, this many blocks

could not have developed. As a result, his face drooped and the left side fully paralyzed. He was unable to walk. At the moment, he says, he is able to walk a little and speak without much difficulty. He is confident that he will recover fully soon.

Yet another patient is about to recover fully. He has been suffering from this disease for about 7 months. He has got his own story to utter. He says that this disease has become normal in our region. He has recovered almost 75%. It is worrisome to hear about his pathetic plight during the period of his penance. I found him walking slowly. The doctors have advised him to continue to walk up to a certain distance so that there would be a speedy recovery. Men have a higher risk of stroke than women. Women are usually older when they have strokes, and they're more likely to die of strokes than are men.

### **International World Stroke Day:**

29<sup>th</sup> October is observed as the International World Stroke Day. On this day, everyone in the stroke community is thanked for their continued efforts in



fighting this disease. Subjects on students learning about stroke, making healthy life style choices, aware of risk factors, teaching others that stroke is 80% preventable etc. are made known to the public on this day.

### **A Recent Research**

A jacket and a glove, complete with an array of sensors are a big thing as far as treating stroke patient is concerned. The apparel's design is still being improved upon by a team of researchers at New York University. Doctors say that it is affordable and amenable to Indian conditions. However, the finding of Dr. Raghavan of New York University is that there were so many gaps in treating the patients. Eighty percent of the people might recover some ability to walk. A series of study by the doctors reveal the fact that even short period of training by the unaffected hand can help get relief to the patients.

## **When to see a doctor**

If any signs or symptoms of a stroke are noticed, the doctors say, the person has to be asked to smile. We may ask the person to raise both arms and check whether one arm is drifted downward or unable to raise up. The person may be asked to repeat a simple phrase and find out if his or her speech is strange or not.



## **Risk factors:**

Many factors can increase the risk of a stroke. Some factors can also increase the chances of having a heart attack. Overweight or obese, physical inactivity, heavy drinking, use of illicit drugs, high blood pressure, cigarette smoking, high cholesterol, diabetes etc. are other factors associated with higher risk of stroke.

## **Remedy to this malady:**

How pity it is to hear that very often young people fall victims of such deadly disease. Is there any doctor's panel to study the cause of the disease which is widely prevalent in Thoothoor region? Medical practitioners belonging to the region can take initiatives with the help of their



fellow doctors. They can find out the areas that are vulnerable to this disease. Don't we have sufficient doctors in our locality? With the available doctors, the goal can be achieved. They can organize medical camps and let the affected and unaffected people be aware of the causes and effects of stroke. It is these doctors who can identify the area which is prone to common illnesses. In the name of

medical camp, what is normally done is that a few specialists would consult the respective patients and prescribe medicines. Well! It's a welcome sign. What is the need of the hour is

health related lessons. These lessons would carry sufficient information which would in turn help the people to be cautious enough in the future. To accomplish this, the dedicated doctors (sons of the soil) should play more responsible role in searching for experts in medical fields. Their work and selfless dedication will give a sense of hope to many people in general and patients in particular. It's clear that many diabetic patients are unaware of the fact that they may also likely to be affected by stroke. How many of them know that they can avoid fat food during parties? History of such disease says that much diabetes have lived even above ninety years of age because they followed healthy food habits. Therefore, it is vitally important for the doctors that they can teach lessons highlighting what should be eaten and what shouldn't be eaten by the people.

An intensive study is also needed to find out whether the benefit of health education is felt in rural areas or not. It's no denying the fact that no equilibrium is maintained between rural and urban areas in distributing the kind of provision related to health education. It's also a fact that with minimum expense the stroke affected patients can survive and regain the functionality of the affected organ with the help of unaffected organ.

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