

Poster Presentation- 19

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON STROKE ADMISSIONS IN A SRI LANKAN TERTIARY CARE HOSPITAL: DATA FROM THE RAGAMA STROKE REGISTRY

Deelaka AGS¹, Dep WDC¹, Nanayakkara YP², Chandrasiri HMJ², Mettananda KCD¹, Pathmeswaran A¹, Ranawaka UK^{1,2}

¹Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, ²Colombo North Teaching Hospital, Ragama

Introduction and Objectives

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has had a tremendous impact on stroke care globally. We investigated the impact of the pandemic on stroke admissions in a Sri Lankan tertiary care hospital.

Methods

We studied the number of admissions to the Stroke Unit and the University Medical Unit, Colombo North Teaching Hospital (CNTH) over four years, and delays in seeking medical care of patients admitted to the Stroke Unit. We compared data during a calendar year of COVID pandemic (01.04.2020 – 31.03.2021) with the preceding 3 pre-COVID years (01.04.2017 – 31.03.2020). Data regarding COVID year was compared with pre-COVID years using independent-samples t-test and nonparametric test.

Results

Mean number of stroke admissions per month during the pandemic was significantly lower compared to that of pre-COVID years: Stroke Unit (monthly mean admissions, COVID year vs pre-COVID years; 11 ± 3.5 vs 20 ± 3.1 ; $p < 0.01$); University Medical Unit ($12 \pm .2$ vs 18 ± 3.4 ; $p < 0.01$). The lowest number of admissions was reported during the period with the highest COVID caseload in Sri Lanka. However, there was no significant difference in the median delays to seeking medical care between the COVID pandemic and pre-COVID years: delay to first medical contact: 2.0 h vs 2.4 h, $p = 0.208$; first hospital admission: 3.0 h vs 3.0 h; $p = 0.993$, admission to CNTH: 3.4 h vs 5.0 h; $p = 0.174$.

Conclusions

Stroke admissions were significantly lower during the COVID pandemic, but there was no difference in the delays in seeking medical care during the same period.