

'Most stroke survivors don't comply with medication'

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Thiruvananthapuram: About 65% of stroke survivors in Kollam district have not been following up their health checkups, finds a study conducted by Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST). Only 35% of the survivors have checked their BP and blood sugar in the last six months.

The study was done by Achutha Menon Centre for Health Sciences, under SCTIMST's comprehensive stroke care programme, with support from the non-communicable division of state department of health and family welfare.

"As part of the study, the stroke survivors in the rural health blocks of Kollam district were identified. It was seen that of the 896 stroke survivors in the community, only 35% of them checked their BP and blood sugar in the last 6 months. Even after

educating them, only 20% more did their blood investigations," said Dr P N Sylaja, professor and head of neurology, comprehensive stroke programme, SCTIMST. "After intervention, the medication adherence improved by 70% to 85%. Tobacco and alcohol use also reduced. We used SMS text messages on risk factor control to the patients," she said.

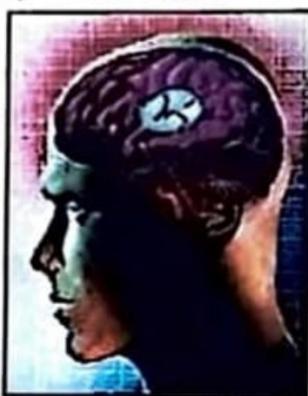
As part of the study, community health workers were trained and educated, and they in turn educated the patients to take medication regularly and to control the risk factors.

"We found that medication adherence improved after intervention. The risk factor monitoring was very

poor in the community and it improved by educating them. The patients with disability after stroke were not getting any effective rehabilitation," said Dr Sylaja, who was also assisted by Dr Biju Soman, Dr Jeemon and Dr Bipin Gopal in the study.

A set of recommendations have been submitted to the state health department. This includes: better utilization of NCD clinics through health workers as being important, strengthening the community capacity for stroke care and rehabilitation. There is a need for health workers to visit stroke survivors periodically for improved medication adherence and risk factor control.

It also highlighted the important role of primary care physicians for educating the patients for regular monitoring. Essential blood investigations for the risk factor control should be made available for all stroke survivors free of cost.



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