



Research Article

Availability and type of stroke services across India: a survey study

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Plain language summary

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Plain language summary

A stroke is a life-threatening medical emergency that occurs when the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off, caused either by a blockage or by a bleed in the brain. Stroke is a common cause of death and disability in India. A stroke unit is a unit in a hospital that solely or mostly cares for people who have had a stroke. A stroke unit has a multidisciplinary team (doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and other health professionals) with expertise in stroke care. Care provided on a stroke unit is known to improve the chances of a patient recovering from their stroke, but throughout India, there are few dedicated stroke units. Our aim was to undertake a survey of stroke services, available staff working in stroke and stroke research taking place across India. A survey was developed and asked questions about the availability of stroke units, services to diagnose stroke, treatments for stroke, health professionals working in stroke, education and training opportunities, services to support stroke survivors and their families, and the involvement of hospitals in research. Data were analysed and grouped by hospital status (private or public). Ninety-five hospitals took part between December 2017 and August 2019, representing 15 states and 2 union territories. Fifty (53%) hospitals were private and 45 (47%) were public. Fifty-six (59%) hospitals reported treating a total of 20,661 stroke patients over a 12-month period (average 300). Only half of all hospitals had a dedicated stroke unit with a total of 596 stroke beds (average 9 beds per unit). Stroke units, stroke-specific staff, education, training and research opportunities, services for diagnosing stroke and treatments for stroke were mostly available within private hospitals; however, there is a lack of available stroke services data. Further research is needed to map stroke service availability and to explore the impact of key stroke service on patient access and recovery.