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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



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**KNOWLEDGE OF STROKE SYMPTOMS AND ITS RISK FACTORS
AMONG HYPERTENSIVE PATIENTS ATTENDING MEDICAL CLINIC
AT TEACHING HOSPITAL BATTICALOA, SRI LANKA**

Krishana S¹, Vathanraj AS¹, Premathilaka AANU¹, Sujendran S²

¹ Faculty of Health- Care Sciences, Eastern University, Sri Lanka

² Department of Supplementary Health Sciences, Faculty of Health-Care Sciences, Eastern University,
Sri Lanka

Background: Stroke is a worldwide health problem and a major contributor to mortality and disability in both developing and developed countries. It is the third commonest cause of death worldwide and the single largest cause of adult disability. It has been estimated that by 2020, stroke will be the leading cause of lost healthy life-years. Awareness of stroke is the major part of preventing stroke and its complications. The recognition of stroke symptoms by the public and activation of the Emergency Medical Services are the most important factors in initiating hospital stroke care.

Objective: To assess the knowledge regarding stroke among hypertensive patients who were attending the medical clinic at Teaching Hospital Batticaloa.

Method: A cross sectional descriptive study was conducted for one year among 269 hypertensive patients recruited by systematic sampling technique. After obtaining written consent, data were collected through a pre-tested interviewer administered questionnaire. Statistical Package of Social Science 19 was used for analyzing the data. Descriptive analysis was done and the association of knowledge with demographical factors was assessed through Chi squared test.

Results: Only 5.6 % hypertensive patients (n=15) had good knowledge, while many of them (n=151) 56.1% had adequate knowledge regarding stroke. The most common risk factors identified were hypertension (79.2%) and hyperlipidemia (40.1%). Sudden numbness (85.1%) and weakness or paralysis of face, arms and limbs (67.3%) were the commonly identified sign and symptoms. There was a significant association ($p<0.05$) between the knowledge of stroke and the following background characteristics; place of living, education, occupation, income, duration of hypertensive clinic follow up and family history of stroke.

Conclusion: Knowledge on stroke among the patients was satisfactory among the study participants in many aspects.

Keywords: Hypertension, Stroke, Knowledge