

Stroke and its Rehabilitation

Stroke refers to the sudden interruption of blood supply to a part of the brain and it is the third killer-disease in Hong Kong. About 16,000 patients were admitted to hospitals and more than 3,000 patients died each year because of stroke in Hong Kong. Because of Westernization of diet and lack of exercise, there are more younger patients suffering from stroke. The usual types of stroke are ischemic and hemorrhagic stroke, which can be identified by modern brain imaging technologies.

A person with high blood pressure, obesity, heart diseases and diabetes mellitus has higher risk of stroke. Advanced age, family history of stroke, smoking, drinking excessive alcohol, and lack of exercise are also risk factors for stroke.

Symptoms of stroke include sudden onset of weakness (usually on one side of the body), headache, dizziness, impaired swallowing, impaired visual, inability to walk, loss of balance and coordination.

With prompt treatment, many stroke patients can improve physically and functionally. After hospitalization, they can stay home and continue their rehabilitation therapy in the community. Stroke patients will receive treatment from a multidisciplinary team composing of doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, dietitians, and medical social workers.

A balanced diet, adequate exercise, and healthy lifestyle are important for stroke prevention. Smoking and heavy drinking should be avoided. Those with high blood pressure, diabetes mellitus, high blood cholesterol and heart diseases should have physicians' consultation and regular treatment.