



STUDY ON ETIOPATHOGENESIS CLINICAL PRESENTATION AND OUTCOME IN 100 YOUNG STROKE PATIENTS

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ABSTRACT **Introduction:** stroke in the young is one of leading cause of death and disability worldwide that requires recognition and aggressive treatment to prevent long term morbidity and mortality. **Methods:** This was an observational study of 100 cases of completed stroke patients in the age group less than 45 years with regard to etiopathogenic risk factors, clinical presentation and their outcome in further follow up. This study was conducted among 100 Young stroke patients who were admitted in government Rajaji hospital, Madurai from March 2013 to February 2014. **Results:** Young stroke is common in the age group 35-45 years. Males are affected more than females in young stroke. Ischemic stroke is more common than hemorrhagic stroke. Thrombotic stroke was more common than embolic stroke. Among ischemic strokes anterior circulation strokes more common than posterior circulation strokes. Motor weakness is the common presentation of young stroke followed by unsteadiness, unconsciousness and speech disturbances. Right sided weakness more common than left sided weakness. Hemiparesis was more common than hemiplegia. Motor aphasia most common type of aphasia in our study. Smoking and alcohol are the most common risk factor for ischemic stroke followed by dyslipidemia, diabetes mellitus and hypertension. Atrial fibrillation is the most common risk factor for embolic stroke. Rheumatic heart disease is the most common cardiac disease causing embolic stroke. Hypertension is the single most important factor for hemorrhagic stroke. Vasculitis, hypercoagulable states, homocystinemia, APLA are rare risk factors for young stroke. Death were seen in 12 % of patients. **Conclusion:** young stroke carries modifiable and non modifiable risk factors, recognizing pattern of clinical manifestations and outcome with long term follow up is necessary to reduce morbidity and mortality.

KEYWORDS : young stroke, ischemic, MCA, ICH

INTRODUCTION

Stroke is the leading cause of death and disability world wide. WHO defines stroke as rapidly developing clinical signs of focal disturbances of cerebral function lasting >24 hrs or leading to death with no apparent cause other than vascular origin. Stroke is a morbid life threatening condition that requires rapid and aggressive treatment to prevent progression from cerebral ischemia to cerebral infarction. In developing countries like India, the incidence of stroke under 45 years is increasing. Stroke in young age is relatively uncommon when compared to old age but has serious impact on the affected families as well as society. The causes are more diverse and differ as compared to the elderly. Overall prognosis is better than elderly but there is still significant morbidity and mortality. Knowledge of the risk factors that leads to stroke under 45 years and evaluation of them is necessary for better primary prevention and health. Non modifiable risk factors include age, gender, genetics, race and non modifiable risk factors include hypertension, transient ischemic attack, diabetes mellitus, prior stroke, obesity, dyslipidemia, homocystinemia, increased fibrinogen, cardiac disease, carotid stenosis.

The incidence of stroke gradually increases with age increasing. Data from the Framingham study shows that incidence of stroke rises from 2-5/1000 in 45-55 yrs, 10/1000 in 56-65 yrs, 20/1000 in 65-85 yrs. The incidence of stroke under 45 years is 2 in 10000. In the Framingham study men aged 45-55 years have a stroke incidence rate of 20/10000, women aged 45-55 years have a stroke incidence rate 11/10000. Male developed strokes at a higher rates than females up to the age of 75 yrs. The rate of incidence of stroke in blacks higher than white blacks had been thought to have higher rates of intracranial atherosclerotic occlusive disease. Auckland, New Zealand, Pacific island people have higher mortality with in 28 days of stroke when compared to Europeans. Chinese, Koreans, Japanese have higher incidence of intracerebral hemorrhage when compared to whites. In developing countries like India, the average age of patients with stroke is 15 years younger than that in developed countries. In India, nearly one fifth of patient with first ever stroke admitted to hospitals are under 45 years. Trivandrum stroke registry showing stroke of about 9.5% under 45 years. Indian studies have shown that about 10 to 15% strokes occur in people below the age of 40 years.

Heredity seems to play a minor role in the pathogenesis of cerebral infarction. However an increased risk is seen with family history of stroke among first degree relatives. Number of inherited disease like Ehler danlos syndrome, Marfan syndrome, Osler Rendu Weber disease, Sturge weber syndrome, Hereditary dyslipoproteinemia, deficiency of Protein C, Protein S, Antithrombin III, MELAS, Fabry's disease, Homocystinuria can cause stroke.

Data from Framingham study shows that men and women with definite hypertension have a three fold greater risk of stroke than normotensive individuals. Female with hypertension who use oral contraceptive pills has 10 fold increased risk of stroke compared with female nonusers of oral contraception pills without hypertension. Diabetes increases the risk of stroke an estimated 3 to 4 fold as compared with risk in people without diabetes. In addition diabetes increases mortality and morbidity after stroke. The mechanism of stroke secondary to diabetes caused by accelerating atherosclerosis, cardiac embolism, rheological abnormalities, low HDL and increasing platelet adhesiveness. High total cholesterol and high low density lipoprotein are correlated with atherosclerosis. Recent meta analysis however have suggested that ischemic stroke increases with increasing cholesterol and reduction in stroke risk associated with statin therapies is related to reduction in LDL. Smoking is a biologically plausible independent determinant of stroke. Smoking has been associated with 70% increased risk of stroke. Stroke risk was greatest in heavy smokers and reduced within 5 years among those quit. It is also an independent determinant of carotid artery plaque thickness, intra cerebral hemorrhage, overall the stroke risk attributed to cigarette smoking is greatest for subarachnoid hemorrhage,

intermediate for cerebral infarction and lowest for cerebral hemorrhage. Alcohol consumption has been shown to be a risk factor for both intracranial and subarachnoid hemorrhage. The relative risk of stroke increased with heavy alcohol consumption (five or more drinks/day) and decreased with light drinking when composed to non drinkers. Heavy alcohol consumption induces cardiac arrhythmias, cardiomyopathy and hypertension increases clotting factors, increases platelet aggregation, also causes activation of sympathetic nervous system.

Presence of Cardiac disease is the most common etiology for embolic stroke. In the Framingham study only 13.6% of patients were free of any heart disease, 80% were hypertensive, 32.7% had prior coronary artery disease 14.5% had cardiac failure, 13.5% had Atrial fibrillation. Coronary artery disease is an indicator of diffuse atherosclerotic vascular disease and act as a potential source of emboli from mural thrombi due to congestive heart failure, dilated cardiomyopathy,

myocardial infarction. Atherosclerotic lesions of the carotid artery bifurcation are common cause of stroke. Asymptomatic carotid artery disease carries a greater risk for stroke. It carries the risk of stroke 1.5% at 1 yr and 7.5% at 5 yrs. Asymptomatic carotid artery stenosis of < 75% carries a stroke risk of 1.3% annually, stenosis of > 75% carries a risk of 10.5% per year. Plaque structure rather than degree of carotid artery stenosis maybe a critical risk factor for stroke. Ulcerated, echolucent,

and heterogeneous plaque with a soft core represent unstable plaque at high risk for producing arterial embolism. Patients who suffer TIA are greater risk than normal controls for stroke. The risk for stroke is approximately 3 times higher. Approximately 10 to 15% of those experiencing a stroke have TIA before their stroke. The interval from the last TIA is an important predictor of stroke risk. Of all patients who subsequently experience stroke, 21% do so in 1 month, 51% do so in 1 year of the last TIA.

Elevated plasma homocysteine level is an independent risk factor for atherosclerotic disease. Patient with high homocysteine level increased risk of thrombotic stroke and PVD in family in young patients. Antiphospholipid antibodies are marker for an increased risk of thrombosis including TIA and stroke particularly in younger patients. The component required for ACL binding is B2 glycoprotein 1 (B2 GPI). It is the B2 GPI dependent ACL of the IGG isotype that has been significantly associated with stroke. It also associated with ocular ischemia, cerebral venous thrombosis, migraine, dementia, chorea, and transverse myelopathy. Paradoxical embolism caused by Right to Left shunt through PFO or ASA can be responsible for stroke.

Antiplatelets, oral anticoagulants, trans catheter or surgical closure of PFO have been recommended. Coexistence of PFO and ASA increases the risk of embolic stroke. The evidence from case control studies suggest that migraine particularly migraine with aura is associated with increased risk of ischemic stroke in young women under 45 years of age.

Cerebral autosomal dominant arteriopathy with subcortical infarct and leucoencephalopathy is a familial non arteriosclerotic, non amyloid angiopathy characterized by migraine with aura, recurrent ischemic strokes leading to pseudo bulbar palsy, cognitive decline, subcortical dementia, and white matter Hyperintensities on MRI. CADASIL is caused by simple missense mutation in Notch 3 gene on chromosome 19q12. Pathologically there is characteristic granular osophilic material in arterial walls including dermal arteries. Familial hemiplegic migraine characterized by transient weakness or frank paralysis during the aura, has also been mapped close to the CADASIL locus. It accounts for up to one fifth of ischemic stroke in young and middle aged patients. In majority of cases the specific etiology remains unknown. Trauma, Infection, Migraine, Ehlerdanlos syndrome, Fibro muscular dysplasia, familial are the main causes of dissection. Like episodes (MELAS), Reversible vasoconstriction syndrome, Moya Moya disease, Sneddon syndrome, Fabry's disease and malignancy includes causes of non atherosclerotic arteriopathy. The most common of those in young stroke patient is cervical artery dissection which has been implicated in up to 20-25% of cases of young stroke followed by vasculitis, infection and Moyamoya in Asian population.

Trauma is the leading cause of cerebrovascular mortality in the developing and developed countries. Blunt or penetrating trauma may result in cervicocephalic arterial dissection, arterial thrombosis, arterial rupture, pseudo aneurysm formation or development of AV fistula. Internal carotid artery thrombosis may also follow maxillary and mandibular angle fractures. Carotid artery hematoma may cause hematoma formation over the lateral neck, retinal or hemispheric ischemia and a Horner syndrome. Primary hypercoagulable states are Antithrombin deficiency, protein C deficiency, protein S deficiency, Factor V Leiden mutation, Activated protein C resistance, Prothrombin G 20210 mutation. Hypo or dysfibrinogenemia, hypoplasminogen, Lupus anticoagulant and anticardiolipin antibodies. Secondary hypercoagulable states are malignancy, pregnancy, puerperium, oral contraceptive use, ovarian hyper stimulation syndrome, nephrotic syndrome, polycythemia rubra vera, paroxysmal nocturnal hemoglobinuria, heparin induced thrombocytopenia, homocystinuria, sickle cell disease, thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura.

METHODS:

This was a cross sectional observational study conducted at Government Rajaji Hospital, Madurai Medical College, Madurai during the period between March 2013 and February 2014. The inpatients admitted in Neurology and Medical ward during one year period between March 2013 to February 2014 were taken up for the study. The clinical details on demographic profile, stroke history, and treatment history were collected by interviewing the patient and from the case history with the help of standard questionnaire. Associated

symptoms, risk factors for stroke were noted in proforma. The diary will be scrutinized monthly during the period of the survey. Patients with age <45 yrs, arterial and venous strokes were included. Paediatric age group patients and patients above 45 years, patients who developed post ictal weakness following seizures, weakness due to infections (TB, Neurocysticercosis, Toxoplasmosis), Tumour like meningioma, weakness due to trauma, with focal neurological deficits due to HIE, attempted hanging, poisoning were excluded. A total of 100 patients of young stroke admitted in neurology and medical wards were included and analysed between March 2013 to February 2014. Data analysis was done with the help of computer by using SPSS software and Sigma Stat 3.5 version (2012). Using this software, range, frequencies, percentage, mean, standard deviation and 'p' value were calculated through One way ANOVA, Chi square, Pearson and Spearman Correlation test and P value of <0.05 was taken as significant.

RESULTS:

In the present study which was conducted over 1 year observation period, totally 100 patients completed the study and they were analysed. Their mean age was 38.9 yrs and 61 of them were male and 39 were females. Young stroke (under 45 years) is more common in the age group between 35 to 45 years. Total no. of cases is in 35 to 45 yrs is 63. The percentage is 63%. Total no. of cases in the age group 25 to 35 yrs was 27 (27%), no. of cases in the age group 15 to 25 yrs was 10 (10%). Our study correlated with Mayotudy. Atherosclerosis is the chief cause of cerebral ischemia. As atherosclerosis is an age related process incidence of stroke is probably less common in age group 25 to 35 yrs when compared to 35 to 45 yrs. Males constitute 63% of young stroke. Females constitute 37% of young stroke in our study. Our study correlates with the Chan MT Morris et al study. Males were prone for stroke than females. Ischemic stroke more common than hemorrhagic stroke. Ischemic stroke contributes 84%, hemorrhagic stroke contributes 16% cases in our study. Among ischemic strokes thrombotic stroke (53%) was common than cardio embolic stroke (33%), cerebral venous thrombosis contributes 14% cases.

In our study anterior circulation strokes commonly involved than posterior circulation. In the anterior circulation middle cerebral artery more commonly involved than anterior cerebral artery. MCA stroke contributes 70%, ACA stroke contributes 14% and Posterior circulation stroke contributes 16%. Aphasia seen in 38 cases accounts for 38% of total young stroke cases. Of the severe aphasia seen in 10 cases (26%), aphasia with weakness seen in 28 cases (74%). Of all the aphasia motor aphasia more commonly involved than other aphasia. Motor aphasia contributes 63%. Sensory aphasia contributes 16%, global aphasia contributes 21% of total cases. Motor weakness more common than others. Weakness contributes 54%, Unsteadiness contributes 13% cases, unconsciousness contributes 15% cases, Pure Language disturbances seen in 9% cases, Headache alone contributes 4% of cases, Seizures alone contributes 1% cases, lower cranial palsies in 2% of cases, sensory symptom in 1% of case. Right sided weakness (65%) most commonly present than left (35%). Hemiparesis (power >3) (62%) most commonly presented than hemiplegia (power <3) (38%). Males are most commonly affected than females. Males accounts for 63% of cases, Smoking, and alcohol is the most common risk factors in male. Smoking alone seen in 48% cases, alcoholism alone in 38%, both smoking and alcoholism seen in 68% of cases. Hypertension, dyslipidemia, Coronary artery Disease, valvular lesions are the most common risk factors for stroke. Of these Hypertension, Dyslipidemia and Coronary artery disease are common in males whereas Valvular lesions are common in females in our study. Positive ANA and positive Rheumatoid factors, and positive APLA are the risk factors present only in females in our study. ANA positivity seen in 1 case, Rheumatoid factor positivity in 3 cases, APLA positivity seen in one case. Homocystinemia seen in 1 case responsible for thrombotic stroke in male patient.

Hypercoagulable status was positive in 4 cases, and causes CVT in 4 patients. Of these 4 patients one patient was male others 3 were female. Protein C deficiency was seen in one male patient. Two female patients had protein C deficiency and another female patient had protein S deficiency. The other remaining 8 patients were female all are in postpartum state. Hypertension is the most common cause for hemorrhagic stroke. Of the 16 hemorrhagic stroke cases 15 cases were hypertension induced and one case of hemorrhagic stroke was due to Hemophilia induced hemorrhagic stroke seen in 11 males cases, and in 5 female cases. Cardiac cause as a risk for cardio embolic stroke was seen in 28 cases. Of these Valvular lesions seen in 26 cases. 2 cases

presented with cardiomyopathy. Of the 26 valvular cases RHD accounts for 20 cases. In all these RHD cases atrial fibrillation seen. ASD seen in 6 cases. Atrial fibrillation present in 5 cases. Hence our study concludes that presence of atrial fibrillation in heart disease increases the risk of cardio embolic stroke. In our study > 50% of our young stroke patients were comes under metabolic syndrome and responsible for both stroke and CAD.

Clinical outcome of weakness at 90 days were assessed, on admission more than 50% of cases were clustered in MRS scoring of 3-4. after 90 days follow up more than 50% of cases were clustered in MRS grading of 1-2 showing significant improvement in motor weakness.

On admission most of the were clustered in modified BARTHAL index SCORING of moderate to severe stage (25-74 score). After 90 days follow up most of the cases were clustered in mild MBI staging (score 75-96). Speech disturbances at 180 days were assessed. Motor aphasia was improved in 21 cases (87.5%) and persisted in 3 cases (12.5%). Sensory aphasia improved to nominal aphasia in 5 cases (83.3%) persistence of sensory aphasia seen in 1 cases (16.7%). Global aphasia improved to motor aphasia in 6 cases (75%) and it was persisted in 2 cases (25%). Unsteadiness was improved only in 3 cases (23.1%). Persistence of unsteadiness was seen in 10 cases (76%) during 1 year follow up. Total number of death was 12 cases. Immediate death seen in 8 cases (66.6%) and late death seen in 4 (33.3%) cases.

DISCUSSION

The stroke is the leading cause of death and morbidity worldwide. A higher proportion of younger individuals suffer from stroke among developing countries as compared with developed countries. By knowing the prevalence of risk factors in both stroke and stroke subtypes we can improve the primary and secondary preventive strategies. Stroke in the young requires a different approach to investigations and management than stroke in the elderly given differences in the relative frequencies of possible underlying cause. In the following discussion I explore the different etiological risk factors in young stroke, their clinical presentation and their outcome in further follow up.

According to Carolei et al, Kwon et al, Varona et al, of all subtypes of stroke in young adults found that thrombotic stroke was the most common subtype followed by embolic and hemorrhagic. Our study correlates with above study. In our study thrombotic stroke were seen in 44 cases (44%) cardio embolic stroke in 28 cases (28%) hemorrhagic strokes in 16 cases (16%), CVT in 12 cases (12%) Overall there is males are most commonly affected in stroke.

Studies (Nayak et al, Lipska et al) performed on ischemic stroke among the 15-45 age group from India also reported a male preponderance. The proportion of cases in our study is higher in the age group between 35-45 yrs which is similar to findings reported by Nayak et al. Presenting symptoms are similar to Chopra, Prabakar and Nayak et al study, In our study embolic stroke presented with profound loss of power in limbs. Mostly they occur in the afternoon Thrombotic stroke occurs mostly in the early morning while people wake up.

According to Mehindiratta MM et al Smoking, Alcoholism, hypertension have been found to be significantly associated with ischemic stroke. Our study also correlates with this study. Smoking seen in 43%, Alcoholism seen in 38%, Hypertension seen in 28% of ischemic stroke cases. Diabetes was not found to be a risk factor in Sweden and Taiwan but in our study (25%) Diabetes is a significantly risk factor. It corresponds to Lipska study. Dyslipidemia (hyper cholesterolemia, hyper triglyceridemia) known to be associated with ischemic stroke in young adults. Dyslipidemia significantly seen in 33 out of 52 ischemic stroke contributing to atherosclerosis in our study. Our study correlates with the Arnold M et al study. Elevated homocysteine level seen in one case responsible for thrombotic stroke in male patient. Antiphospholipid antibody syndrome seen in one case responsible for thrombotic stroke in female. Vasculitis is also one of the cause of young stroke. Vasculitis causing stroke seen in 4 patients in our study. Of these Rheumatoid arthritis contributes 3 cases. SLE seen in 1 case (1.68%). All 4 cases were seen in females. Hypercoagulable status is a rare cause of young stroke. In our study hypercoagulable status seen in 4 cases. All contributes CVT in our study. Among 4 patients, 1 patient was male and remaining 3 were females.

Stroke may presented with various symptoms and signs. Like weakness, numbness, confusion, speech disturbances, slurring of speech, hemianopia, visual loss, headache, convulsion, unsteadiness, giddiness and unconsciousness. Of the 100 cases of stroke Weakness (Loss of power) most commonly seen. Weakness seen in 82 cases. Of the weakness Rightsided weakness is more common seen in 52 cases (63%). Lt sided weakness seen in 30 cases (37%). Speech disturbances seen in 38 cases. Pure speech disturbances seen in 10 cases (26.3%) speech disturbances with weakness in 28 cases (73.7%). Of the various speech disturbances motor aphasia more common than other aphasia seen in 24 cases (63.2%) Sensory aphasia seen in 6 cases (15.7%) global aphasia seen in 8 cases (21.1%). Headache is a common symptom in hemorrhagic stroke. In our study headache seen in 4 cases. All cases are hemorrhagic stroke. Unsteadiness is a common symptoms in posterior circulation stroke. In our study, Unsteadiness seen in 13 cases and were due to posterior circulation stroke. Among these 7 patients also had lower cranial nerve palsy (9, 10 cranial nerves) Unconsciousness seen in 15 cases in our study, of these 15 cases, 11 cases were due to hemorrhagic stroke other 4 cases were due to massive infarct. Convulsions are uncommon in stroke. It can occur in embolic stroke, hemorrhagic stroke and in cerebral venous thrombosis. In our study convulsions alone are the least symptom seen in one case due to embolic stroke. Convulsions with weakness usually seen in CVT. Our 4 patients had similar pattern all are due to CVT. Obesity is one of the features of the metabolic syndrome responsible for stroke and CAD in both younger and older individuals. In our study obesity was common due to sedentary life style. In our study seen in > 50% (55 cases). Over weight individuals contributes 27% of young stroke cases. RHD is the most common etiology for cardio embolic stroke in our study. RHD seen in 20 cases of all cardio embolic strokes (28 cases). ASD seen in 6 cases. Cardiomyopathy seen in 2 cases. Among the 28 cardio embolic cases Atrial fibrillation seen in 24 cases. Hence Atrial fibrillation is the potential risk factor for embolic stroke. Hypertension is the major risk factor for hemorrhagic stroke. Among the 16 cases of hemorrhagic stroke hypertension was present in 15 cases. One case was due to bleeding diathesis (Hemophilia). Secondary causes of hypertension was assessed. Renal artery stenosis seen in 2 cases. Adrenal tumor seen in 2 cases. Coarctation of aorta seen in 1 case. Idiopathic hypertension seen in 2 cases. Chronic kidney disease was seen in 7 cases.

During follow up study over a period of 6 months to 1 year weakness, speech disturbances and unsteadiness were assessed. Weakness and speech disturbances were improved significantly more than unsteadiness. Motor weakness were improved significantly according to Modified RANKIN scale and modified BARTHEL index. Motor aphasia recovered to normal speech in 21 cases. Sensory aphasia recovered to nominal aphasia seen in 5 cases. Global aphasia recovered to motor aphasia seen in 6 cases after intense speech therapy after a period of 6 month to 1 year.

Unsteadiness was not much improved when compared to motor weakness. In our study unsteadiness seen in 13 cases. Only 3 cases were improved partially and able to walk independently. Remaining 10 cases were not improved required assistance to walk.

No. of cases of death were 12 in our study. Immediate death seen in 8 cases. Of these 4 cases due to massive cerebral edema, 2 cases were due to associated systemic disease. 2 cases were due to electrolyte imbalances. 4 cases were died during follow up study. Of these 2 cases were due to aspiration pneumonia and respiratory failure. 2 cases were due to bedsores and septicemia.

CONCLUSION

Stroke under 45 yrs is common in the age group between 35-45 years. Males are affected more than females in young stroke. Ischemic stroke more common than hemorrhagic stroke. Thrombotic stroke more common than embolic stroke in ischemic strokes. Anterior circulation strokes more common than posterior circulation strokes. MCA more commonly involved than ACA and PCA Motor weakness is the common presentation of young stroke followed by unsteadiness, unconsciousness and speech disturbances. Right sided weakness more common than left sided weakness. Hemiparesis more common than hemiplegia. Motor aphasia most common type of aphasia in our study. Smoking and Alcohol are the most common risk factor for ischemic stroke followed by Dyslipidemia, Diabetes mellitus and Hypertension. Atrial fibrillation is the most common risk factor for embolic stroke. Rheumatic heart disease is the most common cardiac disease causing

embolic stroke. Hypertension is the single most important factor for hemorrhagic stroke. Vasculitis, Hypercoagulable states, Homocystinemia, APLA are rare risk factors for young stroke. Weakness and speech disturbances were improved significantly. Unsteadiness not improved significantly. Death were seen in 12 cases.

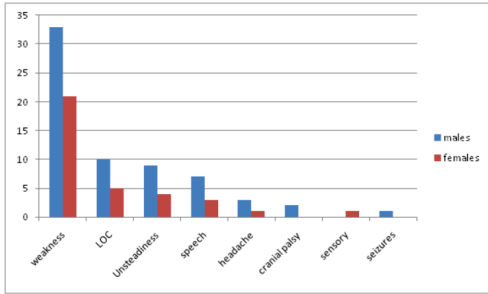


Figure 1: clinical presentation of stroke in young

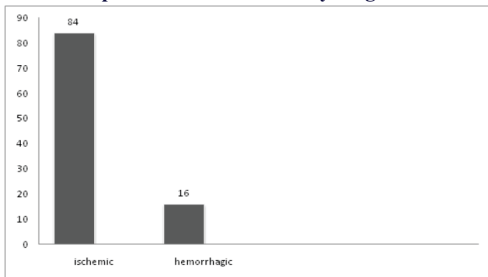


Figure 2: types of stroke in young

Table 1: Ischemic stroke subtypes (TOAST classification)

Types of stroke	No of patients	percentage
Large vessel	36	42.9
cardioembolic	28	33.3
Small vessel	8	9.5
CVT/others	12	14.3

Table 2: Hemorrhagic stroke etiology

idiopathic	hypertension					Bleeding diathesis
3	12					1
	Renal parenchymal disease	RAS	Adrenal tumour	Coarctation of aorta	others	
	7	2	2	1	-	

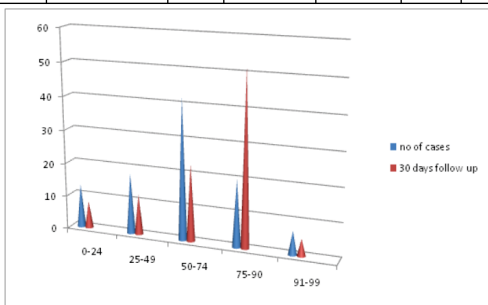


Figure 3: Barthel index score: outcome of patients with stroke

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