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Neurological Burden in Balochistan Province, Pakistan

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Total population of Balochistan is about 13.16 million, while there are only nine qualified Neurologists in the whole province who look after not only neurological disorders of the province, but also patients from nearby countries like Afghanistan and Iran. The common neurological disorders are Stroke, Neuropathies, Myopathies, Epilepsy, Migraine, SSPE, Multiple Sclerosis, Meningitis, Myasthenia Gravis, Parkinson's disease and infectious diseases especially Tuberculosis, which is very common.

Area wise, Balochistan is the largest province of the country and only the city of Quetta has a tertiary hospital. So approach of the patient in remote areas is very difficult to access the tertiary Hospital. Most of the times, patient's visit to hospitals in remote areas turns out to be futile. Lack of transport facilities makes the mobility of serious patients difficult and thereby resulting in mortalities.

Initially, a total of eight beds were given for both male and female patients and only one Neurologist was running the department. After 2008, the induction of other qualified neurologists started and now the department has a twenty-bed ward, with plasma pheresis and electrophysiology facilities. As for our outpatients, 70-100 patients are seen daily with a variety of pathologies including Headache, Movement disorders, Stroke, Cerebral palsies, Myopathies, Neuropathies and Epilepsy.

Neurology department has also conducted Neurology conferences in Quetta in 2005, 2010 and then in 2015, and in between has also arranged CME seminars, workshops, etc. We celebrate designated awareness days for common neurological diseases and there are patient awareness materials available for Stroke, Alzheimer's disease, Epilepsy and Multiple Sclerosis among others, and have also arranged press conferences. Our post-graduate training program is a matter of great pride for us. We now have two fellows for stroke, and one for electrophysiology. The Department of Neurology, Bolan Medical College provides diagnosis and treatment options for disease relating to the neurological system of the body. Inpatient and outpatient services are provided by highly trained and qualified neurologists, supplemented by dedicated post-graduate trainees and nursing staff. Neurophysiology services include Nerve Conduction studies (NCS), Electromyography (EMG), Electroencephalography (EEG).

Thrice a week multidisciplinary meetings are arranged and are attended by Neurologists, to discuss interesting as well as challenging and undiagnosed cases. This helps in getting multiple opinions at one time as well as consensus on optimum management of patients.

The neurology department at Bolan Medical College is also accredited for FCPS Neurology by CPSP and now we have six FCPS trainees. From next session diploma in clinical Neurology (DCN) which will also be started by PGMI. There is no neurology unit in Sandamen Provincial Hospital, Quetta (Civil Hospital, Quetta) even though it is located in center of the city, and is the oldest hospital of the province. Major flow of patients from the city is in this hospital. So another Neurology unit in Sandamen Civil Hospital is required which is in pipeline, and hopefully will be started soon for benefit of common public.

As for as long time program is concerned we are looking for Neurosciences Institute and working paper has been prepared and is handed over to concerned department. It is now our request to authorities to take interest to flourish Neurology in the province for the public interest.

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