

Nationwide Strategy of Stroke Care in Korea



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Stroke is currently leading cause of disability and second leading cause of death in Korea, and became the largest burden to the national health insurance in-hospital budget. Nationwide strategy for management of this devastating disease is mandatory, and there are 6 ongoing programs, either initiated by academic society of government.

The first is assessment of stroke care performance index from all the acute stroke care hospitals. The health insurance review and assessment service department started this program since 2006 and health insurance reimbursement rate for stroke to each hospital is determined according to the 5 grades by assessment result.

The Clinical Research Center for Stroke is government funded research supporting program since 2007. Along with many pioneer researches, it contributed two important nationwide stroke research and practice. The first is establishment of web-based nationwide stroke registry which counts up to 120,000 at present, and the other is development and dissemination of Korean clinical practice guideline for stroke.

Since 2009, center for disease control launched regional cerebrovascular center program and designated 11 hospitals in each wide area. Those designated hospitals are supported by government fund for set up and running of regional cerebrovascular centers, which perform the role of comprehensive stroke center of the region including public education and stroke network organization.

To encourage setup and quality control of stroke unit, the Korean Stroke Society (KSS) launched stroke unit support and certification program in 2012. At present, 43 hospitals are equipped with certified stroke unit by KSS. Recently KSS and Korea Institute for Healthcare Accreditation made a Memorandum of Understanding and cooperated for joint program of stroke center accreditation.

Finally, KSS and other stroke related academic societies are working together to legislate "cardio-cerebrovascular management act" to drive more powerful and effective control of stroke and cardiovascular diseases, but final approval is still under way.
