

Assessment of Patient Compliance with Secondary Stroke Prevention Measures

Shalini Bansil, MD, Angela N. McCall-Brown, APN & Bela Laschiver, APN-C

BACKGROUND:

Recurrent stroke is a major cause of morbidity in patients with ischemic strokes. As recommended by the 'Get with the Guidelines Program,' we educate patients and families regarding secondary stroke prevention. However, it is unclear if these stroke prevention guidelines are implemented after hospital discharge.

OBJECTIVE:

In this preliminary study, we assessed compliance with secondary prevention measures post hospital discharge.

METHODS:

In April 2009 we developed a nurse practitioner initiated program by which patients with ischemic stroke and transient ischemic attacks would be followed about 2 months post hospital discharge. Patients were asked to return to the outpatient center. If they were unable to do so, a home visit was offered and if that was not possible, a structured phone interview was conducted. Patients were assessed for compliance with antiplatelets or anticoagulants, smoking cessation guidelines and blood pressure and lipid management.

RESULTS:

Thirty six patients were evaluated since April 2009. Five of 36 (13.9%) patients were not taking the prescribed antiplatelet medication. One patient stated that she had a gastrointestinal bleed. The others did not have a valid reason for not taking the medication (4/36; 11%). Among the four smokers none had stopped smoking but two stated that they had decreased the number of cigarettes. All patients were compliant with antihypertensive medications but in 2 patients (5.5%) the blood pressure was not well controlled. One patient was not compliant with lipid lowering medication.

CONCLUSION:

Despite intensive education efforts during the hospital stay, a significant number of patients did not have optimal secondary stroke prevention shortly after discharge. This preliminary analysis suggests the need for continued education and medical management of patients with stroke after they leave the acute care setting.

Compliance Rates for Secondary Stroke Prevention

