Improving Stroke Care for Patients at Cavan Hospital
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INTRODUCTION
Stroke is the 3rd cause of death and is the leading cause of disability in Ireland. There are approximately 7,500 new strokes diagnosed in Ireland per annum, with approximately 139 patients presenting to Cavan General Hospital in 2012 and a further 137 TIA’s.

AIMS OF QCCD PROGRAMME
Under the Quality and Continuing Care Directorate (QCCD) in stroke care Cavan General Hospital was identified as a hospital that received a large number of stroke and TIA patients. A programme was established to improve services to this population.

The aims of the programme nationally are to
• provide rapid access to best quality stroke services;
• prevent one stroke every day;
• avoid death or dependence in 1 patient every day.

As a result of cooperation and team working in Cavan along with the support of the QCCD programme 2012 and 2013 has seen significant improvements in care of patients presenting to Cavan Hospital with stroke and TIA.

Some of these initiatives include:
• 24/7 Thrombolysis Service
• National Stroke Register
• Stroke Care Area
• TeleDoc Link with Mater Hospital

STROKE CARE AREA
Cavan General Hospital has opened an Inpatient stroke care area with dedicated multi-disciplinary team with specialist skills in stroke. This team includes medical staff, nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and dietetics. All patients presenting with stroke or high risk TIA should be admitted to the stroke care area for full multidisciplinary stroke care assessment and treatment. A full operational policy has been created in relation to stroke care and is based on the Irish Heart Foundation Clinical Guidelines (2009). This is improving outcomes for our stroke patients and the patients also benefit from rapid access to rehab services in Monaghan Hospital.

TELEDOC LINK WITH MATER HOSPITAL
To support this new thrombolysis service, Cavan General Hospital has commenced a TeleDoc service with the Consultant Neurologists in the Mater Hospital. This is one of the first sites in the country to use this technology whereby the Neurologist in Dublin can remotely see the patient in Cavan Emergency Department, talk to them, assess them and view their scans via a video link. This provides excellent support to the medical teams in Cavan as the neurologist can make suggestions or modifications in treatment and management of this complex population.

CONCLUSION
Stroke is now being classified as a medical emergency. In line with National clinical guidelines patients are now receiving more effective and efficient care. This has been a real Multi-disciplinary team effort involving everyone from Ambulance service through to the Emergency Department, Radiology, Laboratory, Medical Teams and ward staff, including Monaghan Rehab and is proving very beneficial to patients presenting with a life altering condition.

References

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