

Acute Care Teleconferencing



As time is critical in the treatment of stroke patients, Utah-based Intermountain Healthcare has adopted an innovative teleservices platform called Telestroke. The aim is to test patients for the cause of a stroke and diagnose them for a specific medication within 3.5 to 4.5 hours after a stroke occurs, according to an article in *HJnews.com*.

Telestroke enables doctors to diagnose patients while observing them through cameras installed within the Intermountain network and intensive care unit beds. The doctor on call can log on from a computer in the office or at home, and then call into the room. This activates the camera, bringing the doctor onto the television screen in the patient's room.

"When the emergency physician suspects a stroke, they call the Intermountain Transfer Center, a centralised operator service," said Telestroke Medical Director Dr. Robert Hoesch. "They page us, for example 'Telestroke at Logan, bed three', and we call back to the transfer centre. They connect us to the emergency physician and I hear the story from the emergency physician, and then I call into the room."

The patient then completes a series of tests. The doctor uses the National Institutes of Health (NIH) stroke scale, instructing a patient to answer a few questions and testing muscle movement, senses and finger-to-nose touching ability.

After the test, the result indicates whether or not the patient is eligible to receive Tissue Plasminogen Activator (TPA) — a clot-busting medication that needs to be administered within three hours — or whether the patient should be transported to another hospital in the Intermountain network, Dr. Hoesch explained.

Intermountain is a nonprofit health system of 22 hospitals serving Utah and Idaho. Currently, Telestroke can be found at nine Intermountain Healthcare hospitals: LDS, Riverton, Park City, Utah Valley, Dixie, McKay-Dee, Bear River, Logan and Alta View.

"In stroke care, time is of the essence. The faster a patient can get treatment, the better they do," Dr. Hoesch noted, reflecting on the reason Telestroke was needed at Intermountain Healthcare.

With Telestroke, Intermountain has been able to bring its "door-to-needle" time below the national average. "That's the period of time that we see how efficient we are at providing care for strokes ... when a patient enters the door to when the drug is administered," Neuro Intensivist Dr. Shawn Smith said.

"We're hoping to get every hospital in the Intermountain system enrolled in Telestroke. We're on our way," Dr. Smith added.

Source: HJnews.com

Image credit: Intermountain Healthcare

Published on : Thu, 10 Sep 2015