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Neurological disorders in India: Public health and medico-legal challenges

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Neurology is the study of nerves or the medical specialty related to human nervous systems. According to WHO, there are over 600 diseases of the nervous system. Neurological diseases in developing geographies including rural India present public health challenges. It is estimated that for the current population of India of 1.36 billion (2018), there are over 30 million people who suffer from neurological disorders. There is need for more neurologists in India as the current ratio of one neurologist for 1,250,000 population is very low. One of the known reasons for the shortage of neurologists and neurosurgeons is due to the fact that, at least in the USA, almost one in five neurosurgeons (19.09%) each year risk malpractice suits followed by cardiothoracic/vascular surgeon (18.9%) each year. There is need to initiate preventive programs to reduce the risk factors as cardiovascular diseases, hypertension and stroke. The aim of the study is to briefly review the neurological scenario in India discuss the mal-distribution of neurologists and neurosurgeons and its relevance to adoption of telemedicine, major reasons for neurological disorder are medico-legal issues, Doctrine of Res Ipsa, Loquitur protection against litigation, vicarious liability, brain death, important medical negligence cases, challenges in neurological practice and organization of neurology services, unmet needs and way forward. Neurological disorders affect all groups. There is evidence of physicians, hospitals and healthcare organizations ignoring the importance of malpractice insurance and vicarious liability. Furthermore, there is lack of basic knowledge of how judicial forums deal with cases relating to medical negligence. Neurological disorders are clinical, economic and public health issues mandating immediate attention. The efforts of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) must be supported and strengthened so that the needs of the patients even in the most underserved remote and rural areas are met.

Biography

M Habeeb Ghatala has completed his Bachelor's degree from Osmania University followed by Masters in Kansas, PhD in Wisconsin and MHA in Texas. He was the Professor of Sociology at universities in the USA. He has over 25 years of experience in tertiary care hospitals in USA, Saudi Arabia and India. He is currently, serving as a Member of Board of Directors of Hospitals, India.

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