

ASEPA Teaching Course on Focal Epilepsy

January 29-30, 2011, Karachi, Pakistan

This is a brief report on the Workshop on Focal Epilepsy initiated by ASEPA.

Pakistan has a population of 180 million. There are about 120 qualified neurologists, 200 neurosurgeons and 400 psychiatrists who may be involved in epilepsy treatment. MRI and CT are widely available, digital EEG is also distributed, but very few Video-EEGs. SPECT in some institutions, but no PET is available. Epilepsy care is mostly supplied at primary care level. Secondary/tertiary care is available in 12 general neurology units in Pakistan. No established epilepsy surgery units, only lesionectomy was done. Non-compliance is a problem, due to insufficient insurance system. NGO-sponsored National Epilepsy Centre (NEC) is a tertiary care center for diagnosis and treatment as well as national coordination for medical education and public education. OPDs started in 2007 and presently there were 3735 patients registered with regular medicine supply for 30 days. There was a meeting on epilepsy in 2006. It is hoped that the workshop will stimulate more doctors in Pakistan to work towards developing and supporting treatment of epilepsy, especially with consideration for epilepsy surgery.

The workshop was organized by Epilepsy Association of Pakistan (EAP), which has currently 70-80 members. Members of the local organizing committee were Prof Hasan Aziz (chair: Emeritus Professor of Neurology, President of National Epilepsy Centre), Prof Shaukat Ali (President, EAP) and Dr. Zarine Mogal (general secretary, EAP). The workshop was held at Pearl-Continental Hotel, Karachi. Prof Hasan Aziz, Prof Shaukat Ali and Inoue gave the opening addresses. The cost for foreign lecturers was covered by the fund raised to Japan Epilepsy Society (ASEPA fund) by several Japanese pharmaceutical companies. Some local pharmaceutical companies covered the rest.

International speakers included Drs. Neshige R, Koide Y and Inoue Y (Japan), and local speakers were Drs. Minhas F, Mogal Z and Prof Aziz H. Initially two speakers from India were included but unable to get Visa due to strained diplomatic relations. The present speakers covered their presentations. There were 12 lectures with the following topics and 3 case discussion sessions with interesting cases presented by delegates:

- General introduction to focal epilepsy
- Incidence, etiology and genes
- Mesial temporal lobe epilepsy
- Neocortical epilepsy
- Seizure semiology: adult
- Seizure semiology: child
- Lateralization and localization
- Neurophysiology
- Neuroimaging
- Medical treatment
- Surgical treatment
- Epilepsy care in Pakistan/future direction

Lectures were conducted in English. Overall, participants found that the workshop helped to stimulate their interest in the development of epileptology in Pakistan. All lecturers and the local organizers were greatly appreciated for their kind participation in the workshop despite having their busy schedule. All participants received a certificate of attendance.

The workshop was followed by 4-days EEG training workshops by Dr. R Neshige held in Karachi and Lahore. Topics were: Normal EEG (child, adult, elderly), Sleep EEG, Artifact, Hand -on (how to place electrode and how to read EEGs), Focal epileptiform patterns, Generalized epileptiform patterns, and Non-epileptogenic patterns. These trainings were highly appreciated by the participants who have shown a desire to attend further such workshops.

The number of participants was as follows; Karachi focal epilepsy workshop – 110; Karachi EEG workshop – 65; Lahore EEG workshop – 90.

There was an ASEPA-ASNA EEG certificate examination part 1 on 30 January, for which 18 candidates took the examination.

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