

INTERNATIONAL NEUROLOGY UPDATE 2006 & 2ND NATIONAL STROKE CONFERENCE

Abdul Malik

The specialty of neurology has shown remarkable growth in Pakistan in the last 5 years and neurology update conferences have contributed to this growth. These update conferences are primarily held under the initiative of Pakistani neurologists residing abroad, from the platform of Pakistan International Neuroscience Society. The Pakistan Society of Neurology also contributes in making this event successful.

This year, the executive committee of the Pakistan Society of Neurology designated the responsibility of organizing the neurology update conference 2006 & the 2nd National Stroke Conference to the department of neurology, Liaquat National Hospital, Karachi. The conference was held from 22-24 December, 2006. It was the most well attended update conference to date.

There were seven sessions in this conference. Speakers from India, Bangladesh, USA, Canada, Italy and Pakistan shared their experiences pertaining to current topics in neurology.

The core of the discussion was the advances in stroke treatment and the new therapies now emerging.

In the inaugural session of this three-day conference, Prof. Naushad A. Shaikh (Secretary Health, Government of Sindh) was the chief guest. Dr. Farrukh S. Khan (chairman of the organizing committee) stated the statistics of stroke in Pakistan, adding that for every two million people, only one neurologist is available. Prof. Hasan Aziz discussed the future of neurology in Pakistan and said that awareness programs must be arranged on a regular basis.

Prof. Naushad A. Shaikh told the attendees that the government is aware of its responsibility and is working towards providing opportunities for training of professionals in the field of neurology.

Prof. John Nichols, a well known neuroscientist from Italy, talked about the research being done on regeneration of nerve cells and tracts after injury to the spinal cord.

Dr. Mazharul Mannan of Bangladesh discussed the situation related to stroke in his country.

Dr. Shakir Hussain from India said that a number of new therapies were now available globally to potentially reverse neurological deficits in stroke patients.

Dr. Subash Kaul, also from India, delivered a lecture on "Stroke in India: Are We Different from the World." This generated a good deal of discussion among the participants.

Prof. Ashfaq Shuaib from Canada discussed new approaches in stroke prevention and advances in stroke management.

Dr. Asghar Rizvi from USA discussed current advancements in the treatment of multiple sclerosis. Dr. Adeela Alizai, a neuron-ophthalmologist visiting from USA, delivered a lecture on clinical approach to optic neuritis.

In addition to the invited platform talks, eight original papers were presented, representing investigators from India, as well as Aga Khan University, Dow University of Health Sciences, and Liaquat National Hospital in Pakistan. Local speakers included Dr. Bhojo Khealani (Stroke and Risk Factors in Pakistan), Dr. Ayeesha Kamal (Intracranial Disease in the Stroke Population), Dr. Fowzia Siddiqi (Post-Stroke Seizures) and Dr. Khurram Siddiqi (Newer Anti-Epileptic Drugs).

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8TH SHEFFIELD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING

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The two-day 8th Sheffield International Conference on Diagnostic Imaging was held at Aga Khan University on January 13 and 14, 2007. This biennial conference was organised by Sheffield Diagnostic Imaging, a group of UK-based physicians, and Sheffield University UK, and was hosted by Aga Khan University (AKU). The event is unique as the UK-based physicians organize and fund their own travel and other expenses.

The conference was inaugurated by Mr. Hamish Daniel, Deputy High Commissioner, British High Commission, Karachi. In his speech he highlighted the long-standing links between UK and Pakistan in the field of medical education and healthcare. He emphasised the importance of educational and cultural contacts in this time of international mistrust and conflict.

The scientific program consisted of 31 state-of-the-art lectures organised in 7 sessions. The sessions had a speciality focus. The head and neck session was opened by Professor Yousry from the National Institute of Neurology, Queen's Square, London, with a fascinating talk on the surface anatomy of the brain, and the implications of the variations on functional brain imaging. This was followed by talks on the imaging of dementias, CNS infections, carotid artery disease and ENT anatomy.

A scientific poster display was also organised as part of the conference. Over 40 posters showcasing the research in diagnostic imaging from all over Pakistan were displayed. There was great disparity between the scientific quality of the talks and the posters, as most of the posters were descriptive reports rather than new research.

Unusually for a conference held in this part of the world, the organizers managed to keep time for nearly all the sessions. With over 350 registrants the attendance in the scientific sessions (rather than just the social events) was excellent.

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