

STROKE SERVICES AND PUBLIC AWARENESS ABOUT STROKE IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Robert Mikulík

Neurology Department, International Clinical Research Center, St Anne's Hospital, Brno, Czech Republic

Since the nineties of the last century, stroke services started to be established in the Czech Republic. In the majority of cases, stroke services were established within already existing neurology departments. The major driving force for establishment of stroke unit network was the introduction of thrombolytic treatment into the clinical practice. The first use of the thrombolysis in the Czech Republic was reported in 1997, but the official approval was not until 2004. Starting in 2004, all centers performing thrombolytic therapy were urged to participate in Safe Implementation of Thrombolysis in Stroke (SITS) registry. Participation had to be approved by the national coordinator. As part of the approval process, all local coordinators provided data on center characteristics (which later on allowed us to analyze the efficacy of stroke services based on their characteristics). The centers participating in the SITS registry agreed to enter all patients treated with tissue plasminogen activator (tPA) into the database. The volume of thrombolytic treatments in each center is monitored and annually reported to the regulatory authorities (e.g. Ministry of Health) as part of a quality control process.

Since 2007, the Czech Republic has also participated in the SITS-EAST project, which was launched within SITS, to support evidence-based stroke treatments, including thrombolytic treatments in the Central and Eastern Europe.

The number of stroke units performing thrombolytic treatment was growing in the Czech Republic from 2004 every year and reached 50 in 2007. Although the number of thrombolytic centers did not increase since 2007, the number of thrombolytic treatments has been further growing. One possible explanation is that such growth is due to nation-wide stroke awareness campaign, which was launched in 2006 and is still ongoing. To determine the efficacy of this campaign and to improve its efficacy, a nation-wide survey throughout the CR was conducted in 2005 and 2009 to measure the level of stroke awareness about stroke in the Czech population and assess the predictors of calling 911.

Several scientific undertakings have been performed using Czech national data and data from SITS registry, to understand better how the efficacy of thrombolytic stroke unit network can be increased including the above mentioned analysis of the efficacy of stroke awareness campaign. Also, we are currently investigating how the time from stroke symptom onset can be shortened so patients with stroke obtain maximum benefit from the treatment. As the first step, data on more than 5000 patients treated with thrombolysis and enrolled in the SITS-EAST registry, are analyzed. The lecture will cover the results of all these analysis.