

ISIC organizes conference for epilepsy

12 February 2019 | News

The day-long conference hosted by ISIC was organized to advocate a holistic environment for epilepsy awareness and treatment to mark “World Epilepsy Day”.



While advancements in epilepsy treatment have helped a majority of patients lead normal and productive lives, the social stigma attached to it continues to hamper their prospects of marriage and having a family, especially in case of female patients. The need to educate people about this condition and help patients lead successful married lives was a central theme as leading experts gathered at the Indian Spinal Injuries Centre for a major conference on Epilepsy and its challenges.

The day-long conference hosted by ISIC was organized to advocate a holistic environment for epilepsy awareness and treatment to mark “World Epilepsy Day”.

Organized in collaboration with eminent bodies such as **International League Against Epilepsy, International Bureau of Epilepsy and Indian Epileptic Association**, this conference witnessed participation of doctors, medical experts, and researchers from around the globe. Nearly **100 faculties** became a part of the day-long conference in an effort to bridge the gap between awareness and diagnosis of epilepsy, especially amongst females.

A variety of topics such as “Epilepsy and its Global Burden” “Causes of Epilepsy and Epileptogenesis” “Epilepsy and Marriage” “Epilepsy is a disease or as symptom?” “Epilepsy and its social dimensions and impacts” were discussed by eminent professionals such as Dr Aparna Gupta, Neurology, Indian Spinal Injuries Centre, Dr. (Prof) Manjari Tripathi, Dr AK Sahani, Neurologist, Indian Spinal Injuries Centre, Dr Debashish Choudhury, HOD, G.B. Pant Hospital and many others. Especially, the strengths and opportunities of the society which help overcome many challenges were discussed.

Like every other ailment, epilepsy too has gender specific implications. Some issues around risk are specific to girls and women with epilepsy, depending on their age, type and number of seizures and any medication they are on. For some girls and women, there is a link between hormones and when they have seizures. This means that they may be more likely to have seizures, and be at greater risk of injury because of seizures. Awareness on these sensitive stations is important for proper diagnosis and treatment. Women also face a greater burden of the social stigma attached to the condition.

"Epilepsy is a significant health burden, with close to 70 million suffering from it. Unfortunately, awareness, education and sensitization about this condition is limited. Apart from removing the social stigma around this condition, we must also work towards creating better and more holistic treatment protocols for female patients with a focus to enable them have normal lives and families. With effective treatment, a majority of epilepsy patients become seizure free or reduce number of seizures. Major cause of epilepsy are brain injuries. We received patients mostly who have suffered from brain injuries due to road accidents. One should always wear helmets and should take road safety measures. One should always take proper sleep and diet. Patients should take one's medicine on time. Unfortunately, society views epilepsy as a taboo and patients, especially women face challenges in finding a partner. Creating more awareness and sensitization is the need of the hour," **said Dr. A.K. Sahani, Neurology, Indian Spinal Injuries Centre.**

"Epilepsy is one of the most common neurological conditions today. There is a gender divide here too as consequences are far graver amongst women. Because these issues are often complicated and specific to each woman, it is important that women have comprehensive conversations with their epilepsy specialist. As doctors, our efforts should be focused on devising treatment protocols that can help them overcome medical challenges associated with this condition. There are specific issues around pregnancy for women with epilepsy with some anti-epileptic drugs (AEDs) found to have caused birth defects or developmental problems in unborn children. This risk needs to be balanced with the risk of injury to the mother and baby if seizures are not controlled with medication. This is why epilepsy treatment must also evolve to become gender sensitive," **said Dr. A.K. Sahani, Neurology, Indian Spinal Injuries Centre**

The experts also focused on the need for Epilepsy patients with better rehabilitative care and treatments options. Various initiatives for penetration of best available technology and post-surgery rehabilitative and therapeutic care and mindset of loved ones/caregivers were discussed in this conference.

Apart from discussing the above critical issues, ISIC has undertaken a host of activities to generate awareness on the cause of epilepsy. Apart from debunking myths on the causes and the cure of epilepsy, ISIC has conducted events that promote road safety. A walkathon from Mahipalpur to Dedhiya mor was conducted, to promote awareness on road safety. They also have engaged the hospitality industry, visiting dhabas and restaurants to train the cooks in ways to maintain hygiene of the food. Awareness on stroke risk factors was generated through discussion and activities on World Stroke Day. Apart from this, a nukkad natak was held today to generate awareness while debunk myths and sensitize general public, paramedics and citizens on the various points of epilepsy.