

# Your brain seeks your attention

By : Editor Published On : 21 Jul, 2020 11:19 AM IST



INVC NEWS

New Delhi ,

**Brain surgery, brain tumour, stroke (paralysis) and 'sudden amnesia' have always been an integral part of Indian cinema and TV serial's dramatic masala content.** It is unfortunate that often the majority of the public doesn't even try to increase its knowledge in this regard; rather this very subject of brain health is ignored mostly, considering its complexity. According to a study the burden of stroke disease has increased nearly 100 percent in our country. And in the time of Covid 19 pandemic, patients who are already suffering from neurological diseases are facing a tough time. Their treatment process has been deeply affected due to lack of access to their Doctors and availability of medications. The stress and depression generated from the lockdowns and the fear psychosis around Covid has also increased the number of such patients.

This is alarming. A major awareness for brain health is the need of the hour. Our food habits and lifestyle has a major impact on our brain health. At the same time, it is also important to know about the initial symptoms of neurological problems so that early treatment can be initiated. Here Dr. Amit Shrivastava, Senior Consultant, Neurology, Dharamshila Narayana Super Speciality Hospital is discussing the same in detail:-

**Brain health with brain food :** - There is a famous proverb " you are what you eat. And it is more so in the case of the brain. Some people assume that increasing dry fruits intake is the only thing required, but it is not enough. There are other brain foods as well which play key role in brain's development. Take antioxidants rich food like grapes, blue berries, sweet potatoes, green vegetables, fish etc. The fact is 60 percent of brain is made of fat hence add healthy fats in your daily meals, and omega 3 fatty acid also plays a key role in developing brain cells, hence take omega 3 rich foods as well like flaxseed, fish, walnuts etc.

**Be regular with exercises:** -Brain health is not different from physical health in any sense. Regular exercise

helps in maintaining blood pressure and good circulation which is necessary for proper functioning of the brain also. Yoga and meditation also boost functioning of brain.

Physical health and brain: - although every disease or physical ailment affects our brain health, but suffering from one of the following majorly affects brain health:-

- Hypertension
- Diabetes

Basically in above diseases blood pressure play a key role, our blood travels through our blood vessels to the brain, and lower or high BP can result into stroke, brain haemorrhage etc. Take proper medication and keep checking your BP.

There are some neurological diseases people need to know more about: -

Parkinson's Disease: - it is type of a degenerative disorder. Its symptoms appear gradually and progress over the years:-

- Tremors or/and stiffness
- Slurring or speech changes
- Stooped posture, small steps and imbalance

Parkinson's patient need continuous treatment and medication without fail or else it may result to rapid worsening. Never ignore such initial symptoms, immediately see a doctor and start treatment in order to slower the progression.

Alzheimer's Disease :-Repeatedly forgetting recent events in daily life is an initial symptom. It is one of a type of dementia which starts insidiously and progress slowly. Early detection can retard the pace of the disease.

Brain Tumour :- it is basically an abnormal growth of brain cells which starts creating pressure on brain with the growth of its number and size, and presents like :-

- Headache with repeated episodes of vomiting
- Neurological deficits
- Seizures

Like any other Cancer, early identification of brain tumours is one of the key factors that determine the prognosis.

Covid and Neurological problems :-

Covid pandemic should also be seen in the light of brain health as well. Dr.SahilKohli, Consultant, Neurology, Narayana Hospital, Gurugramsays:-

In the time of Covid pandemic we all are aware of the classical symptoms of coronavirus infection but the awareness of the neurological symptoms is lacking.

Neurological symptoms of covid can present as:-

1. Loss of taste and smell: - the term used for losing sense of taste is DYSGUSEIA and loss of taste is called ANOSMIA. Now the irony is that both can be initial symptoms of Covid as well.
2. Headache : - Headache can be an initial symptom and Covid infection may aggravate headaches due to anxiety/fear time of Covid, continuous stay at home, no or less physical activities, uncertainties of future all can aggravate
3. Stroke : - it is seen that blood of Covid patients gets thicker which increases the risk of brain stroke, in western countries young patients are seen getting stroke. A patient has to be treated within 4.5 hours. Patients already suffering from stroke, BP problems, and diabetes should be in touch with doctors and keep taking regular medicines as prescribed.
4. Medicines of chronic patients of neurology often affect immunity; hence they should avoid hospital visits unless it is necessary, they should be in touch with doctor through phone, video calls etc.
5. Cases of anxiety/depression/ adjustment disorders are also at rapid increase hence don't hesitate to see a doctor if not feeling well.

Brain treatment has seen major advancements, Dr.Rajul Aggrawal, Senior Consultant, Neurologist, Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute, New Delhi says:-

Limited knowledge has lead people to consider brain related treatment to be complicated. Especially talking about Parkinson's disease, prolonged treatment and regular medication makes some lose hope. At the same time prevalence of misconceptions are also some of the issues to be taken seriously. Thankfully better research models are being developed, progressive studies are taking place and even a study confirms that next 20 years are going to be "hopeful" for Parkinson's. In every neurological issue early detection is the key. Now deep brain stimulation therapy is also routinely done.

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