COVID-19 Outbreak Impact on Stroke Incidence: the Jamaican Experience
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Introduction

Jamaica’s first index case of novel coronavirus was confirmed on March 10, 2020. Since then the number of cases has risen to more than 5000, 60% of these within 20 miles radius of the Kingston Public Hospital (KPH). Since September 2019, the KPH started a stroke registry as a quality improvement measure to support the stroke care program development at our National Tertiary Referral Centre.

OBJECTIVE: We investigated the impact of COVID-19 outbreak in Jamaica on the total number TIA /Stroke admissions from the Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department at KPH.

Methodology

We reviewed entries for all medical admissions from the A&E Department for the period January-May 2020.

Results

There were 110 stroke /TIA admissions in February 2020. After the first COVID-19 case, Stroke/TIA admissions fell to 74 cases and 60 cases in March and April respectively. TIA/ stroke admissions in the < 50 years age groups rose from 12 cases in February to 20 cases in May, a 67% increase. In particular, for the age group 15-24 years there were 0 cases in February 2020 and 3 cases in May 2020.

Our data suggests that while the pandemic is reducing the overall numbers of stroke presentations to hospital, there may be a tendency for an increase in stroke incidence in the age group 15-24 years. This may be related to the procoagulant effect of novel coronavirus infection among other factors. All patients with stroke in this age group should be tested for COVID-19 infection to confirm or refute this potentially important association.

References