Comprehensive Stroke Center Earns Gold Recognition for Patient Care

Award honors hospitals that adhere to national stroke guidelines to improve outcomes

December 10, 2015 | Michelle Brubaker

When someone experiences a major stroke, almost two million nerve cells in the brain die each minute, emphasizing the need for rapid treatment. Stroke patients who receive life-saving interventions more quickly have a higher chance of recovery. A recent data analysis showed the Comprehensive Stroke Center at UC San Diego Medical Center exceeded national average treatment times, and as a result, has received a "Get With The Guidelines-Stroke Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award" from The American Heart Association and American Stroke Association (AHA/ASA).

Comprehensive Stroke Team at UC San Diego Medical Center.

UC San Diego Health is part of a group of hospitals recognized for their commitment and success in implementing a higher standard of stroke care by ensuring that patients receive the most appropriate treatment according to nationally recognized, research-based guidelines and recommendations.

"Our success as a Comprehensive Stroke Center is a team product, including neurologists, radiologists and pharmacists all working together with one goal: to provide the fastest and most effective treatments using the highest level of imaging and diagnostic tools," said Thomas Hemmen, MD, PhD, professor in the Department of Neurosciences at UC San Diego School of Medicine and

clinical services chief of neurology at UC San Diego Health. "Receiving this award validates our ongoing efforts to turn guidelines into lifelines."

To receive a Gold Plus Award, a hospital must achieve 85 percent or higher compliance to core standard levels of care as outlined by the AHA/ASA for two or more 12-month consecutive periods and achieve 75 percent or higher compliance with five of eight "Get With The Guidelines-Stroke Quality Measures."

According to the AHA/ASA, on average, someone suffers from a stroke every 40 seconds. The neurological event is the fifth-leading cause of death in the United States.

"We are pleased to recognize UC San Diego Health for its commitment to stroke care," said Deepak L. Bhatt, MD, MPH, national chairman of the Get With The Guidelines steering committee, executive director of interventional cardiovascular programs at Brigham and Women's Hospital and professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. "Studies have shown that hospitals that consistently follow Get With The Guidelines quality improvement measures can reduce length of stay and 30-day readmission rates and reduce disparities in care."

UC San Diego Medical Center was the first to receive Comprehensive Stroke Center certification in San Diego County in 2012 and has pioneered endovascular approaches using state-of-the-art devices for procedures, such as embolectomies – the surgical removal of blood clots.

"This honor not only reflects the life-saving technologies used when every minute counts, but it also recognizes the high quality of elective care our center provides to patients diagnosed with conditions such as brain bleeds and aneurysms or who have suffered from a previous stroke," said Alexander Khalessi, MD, vice chairman of clinical affairs for neurosurgery and director of endovascular neurosurgery at UC San Diego Health.

The center also brings instant expertise to other organizations and saves lives beyond San Diego County with the stroke telemedicine program, which transports stroke specialists virtually via computer desktop or laptop to the patient's bedside using highly sophisticated video, audio and Internet technologies.

"Time is brain during a stroke, so it is paramount we continue to use innovative approaches that lead the way in stroke care," said Khalessi, who also played a critical role in working with the AHA/ASA to write new guidelines on early management of acute ischemic stroke.

Learn more about UC San Diego Health's Comprehensive Stroke Center

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Care at UC San Diego Health

Comprehensive Stroke Center

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