

European Stroke Organisation Department to Department Program 2019

- Report by Dr. Inna Lutsenko, ESO member, ESO EAST Coordinator in Kyrgyzstan
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- Period of visit: 9 to 14 December 2019

Due to becoming a finalist of „ESO Department to Department Visit Programme“ and invitation of Prof. Francesca Romana Pezzella, I was able to visit the Stroke Unit at San Camillo Hospital in Rome.

I met Prof. Pezzella during her visit in Kyrgyzstan in the role of ESO expert for the „Roadmap for Stroke“ Project, in 2017. Since then, I have been participating as a part of the working group for this project and was working with Dr. Pezzella during her visits in Kyrgyzstan and online as well. I was impressed to hear that Dr. Pezzella was one of the developers of the Italian Version of NIHSS scale with the adaptation it to the Italian language for patients. In Kyrgyzstan, where the stroke services are on the beginning of its development, my team was adapting NIHSS scale to Kyrgyz language with the approbation which took 1 year and then was implemented. Seeing Dr. Pezzella as such a great example as a leading scientist at stroke services in Rome and ESO expert as well, I was grateful and happy when she confirmed my visit and invited me to have an observership at San Camillo Hospital.

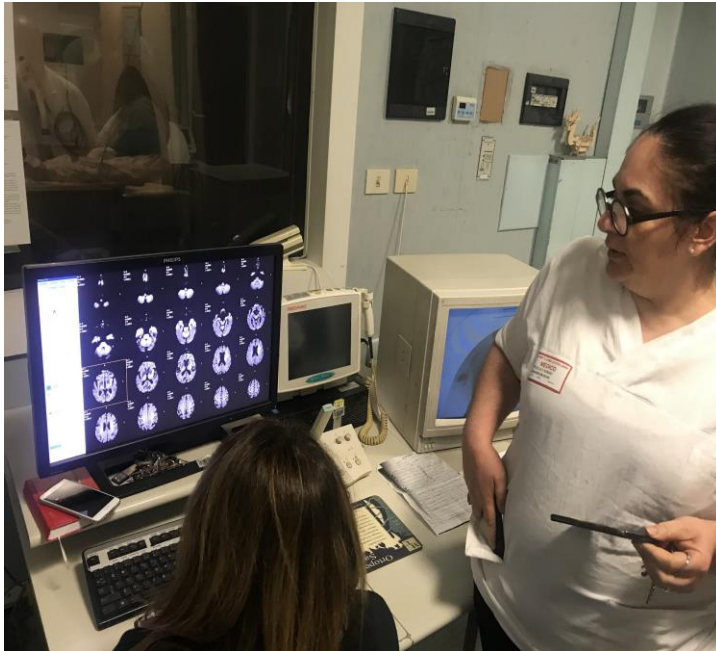
San Camillo Hospital” is located in Rome and is part of the complex “San Camillo-Forlanini Hospitals”. Hospital is functioning with several pavilions and the stroke department is located in „Neuroscience“ pavilion. Here also radiological department, emergency department with triage and pediatric emergency department are located. San Camillo Hospital is the first hospital in Rome to have a resuscitation unit and the first for cardiac surgery with a coronary unit active in the late 1960s.; and gradually it has been equipped with medical-scientific resources and the infrastructures necessary to deal with almost the entire range of pathologies (Website "[Azienda Ospedaliera San Camillo Forlanini](http://www.aziendaospedaliera-sancamillo.it)"). Some historical part can also be seen on the site: <http://himetop.wikidot.com/ospedale-san-camillo>



This historical hospital includes several pavilions with high ceilings, arches, pathways. The spirit of long years of history is harmonized with modern approaches to treatment, the presence of a huge radiological department with all the necessary devices, a large pharmacy with every possible arsenal of medicines.

Stroke Unit at San Camillo Hospital is a „hub Center“ for stroke management for the Lazio region. From the regional „spoke“ stroke centers patients are admitted to San Camillo Hospital for the advanced treatment: thrombectomy and qualified stroke specialists monitoring.

Dr. Francesca Pezzella works on very intensive shifts in stroke unit and consults emergency patients at triage and emergency department. Thrombolysis and thrombectomy are indicated by duty stroke neurologist in collaboration with radiologist to ischemic stroke patients, who admitted in the therapeutic window. All stroke cases are carefully analyzed, after routine CT-scan for the exclusion of the intracerebral hemorrhage, the MRI is done for the ischemic zone mismatch detection and decision about



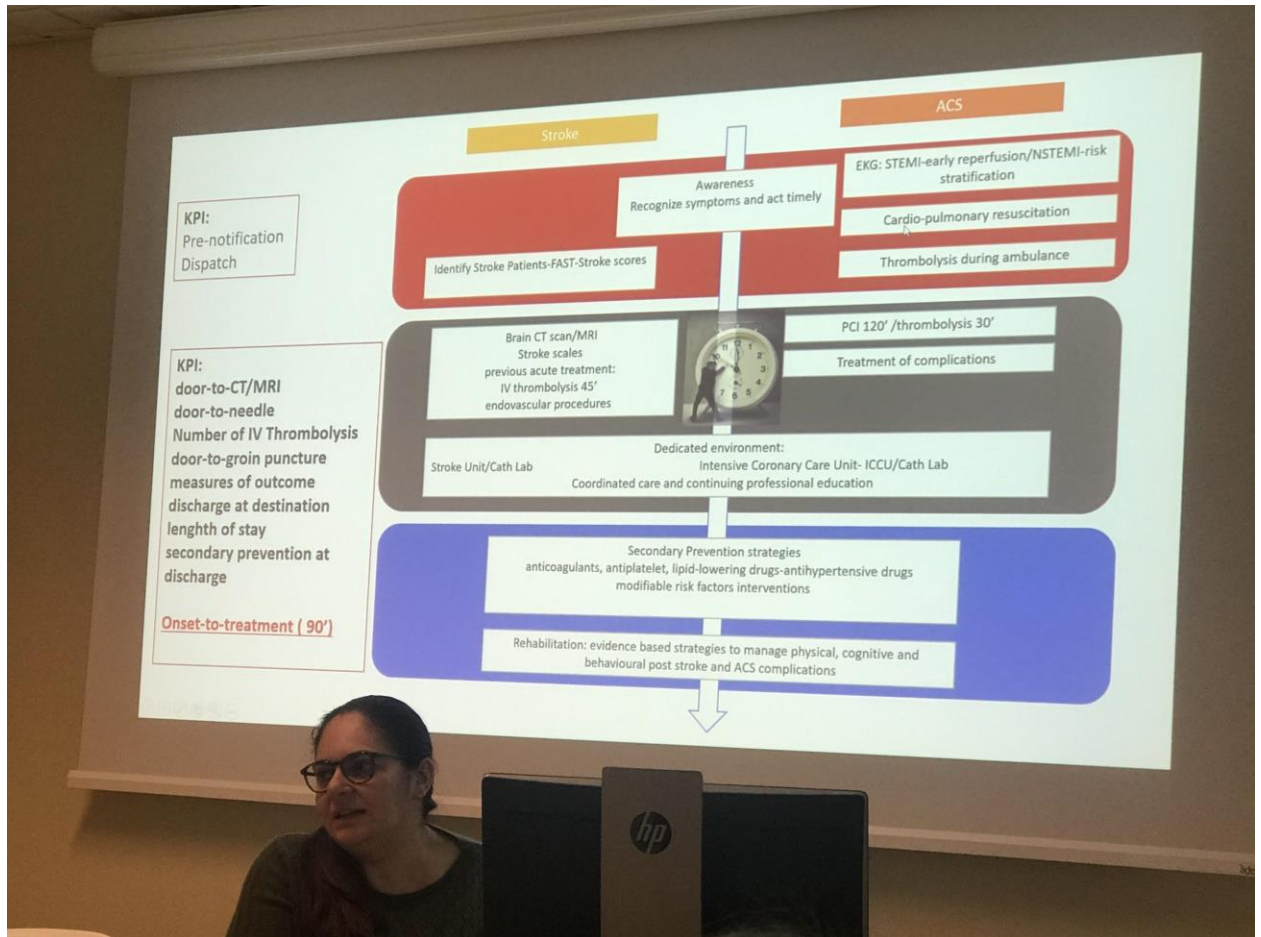
thrombectomy.

My special focus of attention was the stroke services organization, stroke pathways and stroke management. Since 2015 I have been involved in the changes of stroke management in Kyrgyzstan, I was planning to observe an entire stroke pathway for the stroke patient in Rome, who admits to San Camillo Hospital, which is the “hub” for stroke management in Lazio region. The stroke pathway in the hub is very organized: after admission to hospital, patient is delivered to the „red emergency zone“, where is immediately evaluated by the duty specialist and stroke neurologist. CT-Scanners, MRI and Angio are located in the same building and these investigations are done promptly. Stroke patient is always evaluated according to NIHSS and results with the primary evaluation are saved in the electronic records system. What I really liked, is that each patient is observed by several stroke specialists in the perspective and by neurosurgeons, radiologists and other specialists simultaneously. This consilium-like observation reduces mistakes and improves the treatment and outcome. Each stroke patient is treated according to ESO and national stroke treatment Italian guidelines with only approved evidence based medicine approach. For the stroke cause searching, wide range of laboratory investigations is in service. Young stroke patients are examined on homocysteine level, genetic predisposition, and heart conditions for the careful etiology detection. All this complex and advanced system of stroke management in San Camillo Hospital increases chances for stroke patients recovery, fast actions of doctors and established service reduces disability and increases survival. Clinical residents take an active role in seeing the patients and in morning rounds as well as in 12h duties.

At the second day of my observership I was privileged to attend a meeting at an Italian Parliament at Rome by invitation of Dr.Pezzella. The agenda of this meeting was a press-conference given by leading Italian neurologists to the Parliament and to mass-media on the topic : “Stroke in Italy and actions to reduce its burden”. Italian neurologists have been collaborating with Angels Initiatives project for several years and achieved results. With the Angels Initiatives project some hospitals in Italy reduced „door to treatment time“ which is a crucial indicator for the successful stroke recovery. Past ESO - European Stroke Organisation President Dr.Valeria Caso presented a touching video about the patients suffered from stroke. Dr. Caso appealed to the stakeholders to pay more attention on the necessities of the unifying the stroke units functioning across all Italy. Dr. Francesca Romana Pezzella, Co Chair for the Stroke Action Plan in Europe, leading stroke neurologist in Rome, collaborator on stroke guidelines in Italy, presented a speech with an appeal to promote and bring to the action Stroke Action in Italy. Access to thrombolysis and thrombectomy for the patients with ischemic stroke should be available in all Italian Hospitals.



Also I had a chance to attend Bio Medico Hospital where Prof.Pezzella gave a speech about the improvement of the stroke pathways for stroke specialists.



I want to notice as well, that the atmosphere in the stroke and general Neurology Departments was welcoming and positive. Doctors and nurses were friendly to guest specialists, they collaborated and included you in the daily routine very fast. This special atmosphere of “cheerfulness”, optimism, mutual assistance, positive emotions, which is very typical of Italy, you will not meet anywhere else. It was very touching that medical personnel tried to keep a Christmas spirit with installing small Christmas trees to decorate the departments. And everything was harmonious: communication with colleagues, mutual respect and support, positive emotions and a bit of humor that accompanies hard routined days.

It was a really memorable event and a fruitful observership for me which will play a role in changing the stroke management in Kyrgyzstan. For the Central Asian countries we can take an example of our colleagues from Italy, who also struggled to implement changes as new stroke scales, electronic records, robotic pharmacy, highly functioning neuroimaging inside the same pavilions where stroke patients are admitted. On their experience we see that it became possible and functioning on a high level for many years.

I want to express my gratitude to my mentor Dr.Francesca Romana Pezzella for the kind welcoming, detailed explanation of stroke pathways in Italy and chances to attend other hospitals and events. Dr.Pezzella is an example of hard-working practicing neurologist and a leading scientist in stroke and public health field, as well as an attentive and kind human. I am very grateful for the invitation to the Christmas celebration with stroke unit colleagues and residents, it was very touching and will stay in my heart for long years.

My gratitude is also going to stroke unit doctors Dr.Sabrina Anticoli, Dr.Christina and to the resident Alessio Petrunaro which helped me through the entire visit.

