Effect of Brunnstrom Movement Therapy Combined with Neurodevelopmental Therapy on Balance and Mobility in a Patient with Acute Stroke: An Interesting Case Report

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Authors’ contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Stroke is the world’s second leading cause of death and the third leading cause of disability. Ischemic strokes account for 68 percent of all strokes worldwide, while hemorrhagic strokes account for 32 percent. A stroke is a medical emergency that requires immediate attention. Early intervention can help to prevent brain damage and other problems. The present case report is of a 24 year male suffered with stroke on 24th July 2021. He was private employee in a hospital. He was presented with weakness of left side of the body. He was treated by using brunnstrom movement...
therapy and Neurodevelopmental therapy (NDT). He was treated for a period of 4 weeks. First two
weeks as inpatient and last two weeks as outpatient. He was treated one hour per day, 5 days a
week for 4 weeks. Modified Ashworth scale (MAS), brunnstrom recovery stages of upper limb,
lower limb and trunk were taken pre and post treatment. There was tremendous improvement in
both upper and lower limbs. Patient is able to walk and perform all the activities. Thus in
conclusion, brunnstrom movement therapy in combination with NDT is an effective treatment
strategy for early recovery of stroke patient.

Keywords: Stroke; cerebrovascular accident; physiotherapy; brunnstrom movement therapy;
Neurodevelopmental therapy; rehabilitation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Stroke is becoming a major cause of early mortality and disability in low- and middle-income
countries such as India, owing to changing demographics and the rising incidence of key
modifiable risk factors. As a result, emerging countries are burdened with both communicable
and non-communicable diseases. The majority of stroke survivors continue to live with disability,
and the costs of ongoing rehabilitation and long-term care are borne primarily by family members,
putting their families in financial jeopardy [1]. In low- and middle-income nations, hypertension is
thought to be the leading cause of stroke, followed by hypercholesterolemia (15%) and
cigarette smoking (12 percent ) [2]. The brain, which is the primary organ damaged by stroke, is
metabolically active, requiring roughly 50ml/100g/min blood flow and a 3.5cc/100g/min
oxygen metabolic rate. Brain cell activities are significantly harmed if blood flow falls below
10ml/100g/min, and neurons cannot survive for long at levels below 5ml/100g/min [3]. The period
following a stroke is frequently divided into parts. The Stroke Roundtable Consortium advocated
designating the hyperacute phase as the first 24 hours, the acute phase as the first 7 days, the
early sub-acute phase as the first 3 months, the late sub-acute phase as the months 4–6, and the
chronic phase as the last 6 months [4]. Stroke can induce a wide range of symptoms and signs
but the most common and well-known impairment is motor impairment, which normally
impairs the control of movement on one side of the body's face, arm, and leg and affects 80% of
patients to variable degrees. Stroke rehabilitation focuses primarily on restoring damaged
movement and function in order to lessen impairment and encourage participation in daily
activities [5].

2. PATIENT FEATURES

Patient presented with weakness of left half of the day (Fig. 1). He was not able to do any
movements on his left side. On examination left shoulder and hand were in brunnstrom stage 1
going to 2. Left lower limb was in stage 2 going to 3. There were exaggerated deep tendon
reflexes in left upper and lower limbs. Speech was impaired. Facial deviation was mild.

2.1 Patient History

The patient is a 24-year-old man. On July 15, 2021, he suffered a stroke and became left-sided
hemiplegic, rendering him paralysed on the left side for a short time before resuming full
function. Later that day, he experienced complete loss of sensation in his upper and lower
limbs on the left side of his body, and he approached in our tertiary care hospital for
additional treatment, where he was treated for 15 days. Later he continued outpatient
physiotherapy treatment for 2 more weeks.

2.2 Physiotherapy Treatment

Patient was medically stable from day 1, he was given physiotherapy based on brunnstrom and
Neurodevelopmental therapy (NDT). The details of the problems and problem-solving approach is
given in Table 1. Berg balance scale, Brunnstrom recovery stages, Gait parameters were taken
both on day 1 ad on the last day of treatment. Details of the outcome measures are given in
Table 2.

3. RESULTS

The tendoachilles, biceps and hip adductors were mildly spastic but after 4 weeks there was
no obvious increase in tone. Balance evaluation and various gait parameters which were severely
affected were drastically improved after 4 weeks. Spontaneous recovery along with planned
management helped in faster recovery.

4. DISCUSSION

Stroke if managed early can recover completely without any residual impairments [6].
In stroke rehabilitation, patient (and caregiver)
participation in patient-centered interdisciplinary goal planning has been linked to increased patient motivation and engagement in therapy, as well as improved rehabilitation outcomes [7]. The recovery in this patient is in line with the previous study by wagenaar et al. [8]. Maximum recovery in patient can be mainly attributed to the stable vitals and as the patient was medically stable. We were able to give functional treatment as the patient was able to receive it. We have utilized the hyperacute phase that is within one week to gain maximum recovery. This was in line with the study by fang et al. [9]. Early physiotherapy also helped patient for early discharge and thus overall recovery. This is in line with previous study by Thorsen et al. [10].

Fig. 1. Patient with left hemiplegia

Table 1. Depicting Problem solving approach management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem identified</th>
<th>Cause of the problem</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Treatment strategy</th>
<th>Equipment used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hypotonia</td>
<td>Injury to the brain because of the CVA</td>
<td>To develop tone in postural and phasic muscles</td>
<td>Facilitatory techniques for Postural and phasic muscles</td>
<td>Direct handling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in bed mobility</td>
<td>To enhance bed mobility</td>
<td>NDT facilitations and brunnstrom approach</td>
<td>Physio balls, direct handling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in sit to stand activity</td>
<td>Promote sit to stand activity</td>
<td>Strengthening exercises to gluteus maximus, quadriceps and tibialis anterior</td>
<td>Direct handling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in standing independently</td>
<td>Improve standing balance</td>
<td>Balance training on stable and unstable surface</td>
<td>Soft foam pad, balance board</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in walking</td>
<td>Gait training with emphasis on gait parameters</td>
<td>NDT strategies to train gait.</td>
<td>Direct handling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Depicting the outcome measures and their pre and post treatment scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Measure</th>
<th>Pre-Test scores (Lt side)</th>
<th>Post test scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAS (TA, biceps, hip adductors)</td>
<td>Normal tone, (There was no hypertonicity noticed)</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berg balance scale</td>
<td>Unable to test</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadence</td>
<td>Unable to test</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stride length</td>
<td>Unable to test</td>
<td>72 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gait velocity</td>
<td>Unable to test</td>
<td>32 sec</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. CONCLUSION

We would like conclude that early functional and goal oriented physiotherapy will help in early overall recovery, early discharge and prevent unusual complications in early stages post stroke. Thus, brunnstrom approach for assessment and initial management and NDT for functional recovery can be used effectively immediately in post stroke patients when their vital parameters are stable. More high-quality studies are required to prove the efficacy of treatment.

CONSENT AND ETHICAL APPROVAL

As per international standard or university standard guideline Patient’s consent and ethical approval has been collected and preserved by the authors.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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