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Interview with a stroke patient

By Prasad Shetye, Rohan Pai and Tejas Deodhar
The GTF Group

Prasad Shetye: PS
Rohan Pai: RP
Tejas Deodhar: TD

PS: Good evening, I am Prasad Shetye, I am currently a 9th Grader in Northview High School. Today we will refer to you as Mr. John to retain your anonymity.

RP: I am Rohan Pai, I am currently an 8th grader in Pinckneyville Middle School.

TD: I am Tejas Deodhar and I am currently an 8th grader in Piney Grove Middle School. We are all members of Georgia Thrombosis Forum (GTF, www.gtfonline.net), which is an affiliate of North American Thrombosis Forum, www.NATFonline.org.

RP: In GTF we often interview patients who have suffered thrombotic events. The primary objective of this is to learn more about the experience of the patient.

Author's notes: The name of the patient has been blocked due to confidentiality, and the patient is referred to as Mr. John throughout this interview. Rohan's name has been referred to by the initial RP, Prasad's name is referred to as PS, and Tejas's name is referred to as TD.

PS: Thank you Mr. John for agreeing to this interview, we hope to develop a good understanding about how to effectively get information from patients who have suffered disorders, and how to conduct formal interviews.

RP: Mr. John we are sorry to know that you have suffered a thrombotic event in the recent past. We have compiled a list of medical questions for you to answer which are related to your condition.

TD: We hope that you do not mind us asking, however could you tell us your age?

Mr John: No, I do not mind at all. I am 84.

TD: Did you have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes in the past?

Mr. John: I have Type 2 Diabetes, along with high blood pressure which has been with me for the past 20 years. I also have high cholesterol.

RP: Did you suffer from DVT, PE or atrial fibrillation?

Mr. John: I had a prior MI and a stent was put in my coronary arteries. I did not have DVT, PE or atrial fibrillation.



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PS: Do you have a family history for stroke?

Mr. John: My elder brother had a stroke at the age of sixty. My elder brother also had diabetes.

Notes: This fits with our hypothesis that Diabetes and Stroke are connected. High blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol and family history were all risk factors in this patient

Mr. John: Twenty years ago my blood pressure was normal. Around that time, my spouse was very sick, and I had to do a lot of running around to take care of her. This caused significant stress and led to high blood pressure.

RP: Was your weight in normal range?

Mr. John: Yes around 110-115 Pounds.

TD: Did you ever smoke, or are you currently a smoker?

Mr. John: No, I do not smoke, nor did I ever smoke in the past.

PS: Do you eat a healthy diet?

Mr. John: Yes, I take my food regularly at regular time, in limited quantities. I also avoid eating sweets which contain sugar. I do not eat potato, rice, wheat, nor meat. Prior to stroke, I ate flatbreads, and rice.

TD: Do you exercise regularly?

Mr. John: I do. Yoga, along with stationary cycling is my current mode of exercise. I used to walk as well, however due to recent knee issues, I am unable to walk. I bike twenty minutes in the morning, and twenty minutes in the afternoon.

PS: When approximately did you first experience your thrombotic event?

Mr John: May 2000

RP: Did you have any previous knowledge of what a stroke is?

Mr John: I had knowledge what a stroke is due to my elder brother.

PS: When did the condition start?

Mr. John: January, 6 2017

Note: In 2000 he had a mild heart attack, that occurred in India. The patient also had a stroke in 2017 in the United States.



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Note: The son feels that it could have been a stroke in 2000, however in 2017 his condition was definitely a stroke.

TD: Where were you when this happened?

Mr. John: I was in my home. I felt that I was losing balance, my son was there as well and he also took notice about my condition. I was standing in one location for a long period of time. When I tried walking I was dragging my feet when walking. My right hand was also not moving. When I tried to drink tea and eat cookies, half of the cookie was falling out of my mouth. The drooping of my face was also noticeable to others.

RP: Did you experience any of the following symptoms?

1. Sudden numbness or weakness in the face, arm, or leg on one side of the body

1.1. Mr. John: Yes, I had slight numbness and slight weakness.

2. Blurred, or loss of vision, double vision, sudden visual loss, or temporary loss of vision in one eye

2.1. Mr. John: No, my vision was normal.

3. Rapid and involuntary movement of eyes.

3.1. Mr. John: No.

4. Loss of consciousness and dizziness.

4.1. Mr. John: No, I remained conscious throughout my condition.

5. Severe headaches and inability to understand.

5.1. Mr. John: No, I was able to comprehend everything around me.

6. Difficulty walking, paralysis with weak muscles, problems with coordination, stiff muscles, overactive reflexes, or paralysis of one side of the body, numbness.

6.1. Mr. John: I was limping slightly, my left hand was stationary, the left side of my face was drooping, and my left leg was dragging.

7. Balance disorder (no balance problem), fatigue, lightheadedness, or vertigo

7.1. Mr. John: No, I felt stable.

8. Difficulty speaking, slurred speech, or speech loss



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8.1. Mr. John: My speech was slightly impaired.

9. Pins and needles or reduced sensation of touch

9.1. Mr. John: My sense of touch was normal as well.

10. Difficulty swallowing, headache, inability to understand, mental confusion, numbness, or rapid involuntary eye movement

10.1. Mr. John: No, I didn't experience any of the above symptoms.

TD: Were you hospitalized for your condition? If so, for how long did you remain in the care of a healthcare staff?

Mr John: I was taken to the hospital and put on a video conference with a stroke specialist. He diagnosed my condition of stroke. Due to the fact that the diagnosis was made within three hours of initial symptoms I was a candidate for r-TPA (recombinant tissue plasminogen activator). I was then kept in the ICU for an hour.

RP: Who diagnosed your stroke?

Mr. John: A neurosurgeon, through video conference. The initial suspicion that I may have a stroke was through by my son, however.

PS: How was the stroke diagnosed? Here are some of the tests that I understand that are commonly used, please let me know whether the test was used or not:

a. Blood test: This test measures blood sugar, blood glucose levels, balance of certain blood chemicals and clotting time of the blood

Mr John: Yes, these tests were conducted after my diagnosis.

b. MRI: This test uses radio waves and a magnetic field to form a detailed image of the brain and detect damage of brain tissues

Mr. John: Yes an MRI was obtained. The doctor told me that there was some damage to the white matter in the brain which was probably caused by the stroke. These areas may indicate some type of injury to the brain, perhaps due to decreased blood flow in that area. The doctor told me to do exercise and that they want to make sure that the white matter areas in the brain should not grow.

c. EKG: This test measures electrical activity within the heart

Mr. John: Yes, an EKG was obtained.

d. CT scan: This test uses X-rays to show a detailed image of the brain, including hemorrhage, tumor, stroke, etc.



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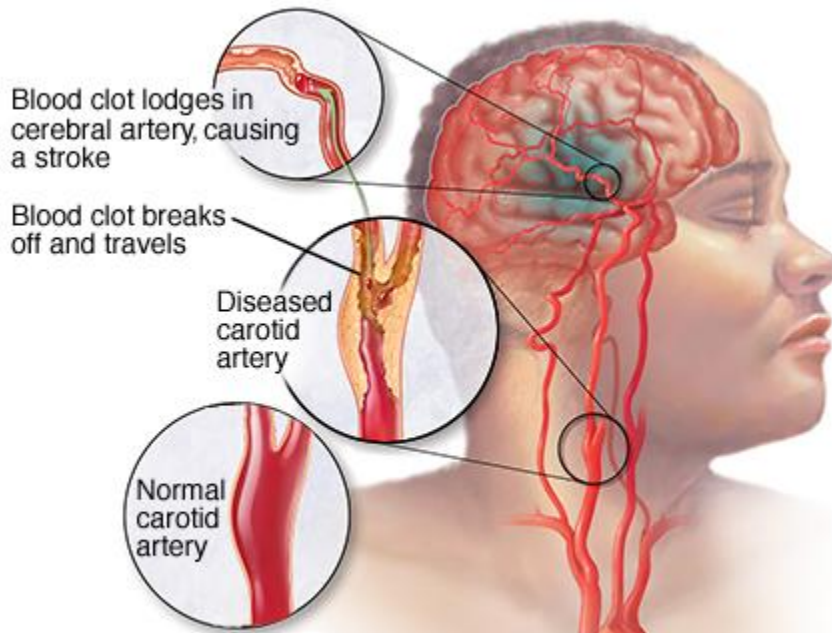
Mr. John: No CT scan was obtained.

- e. Carotid ultrasound: This test uses sound waves to identify plaque and blood flow within the carotid arteries

Mr. John: Yes, it was most likely performed, and the exact location of the block could not be detected.

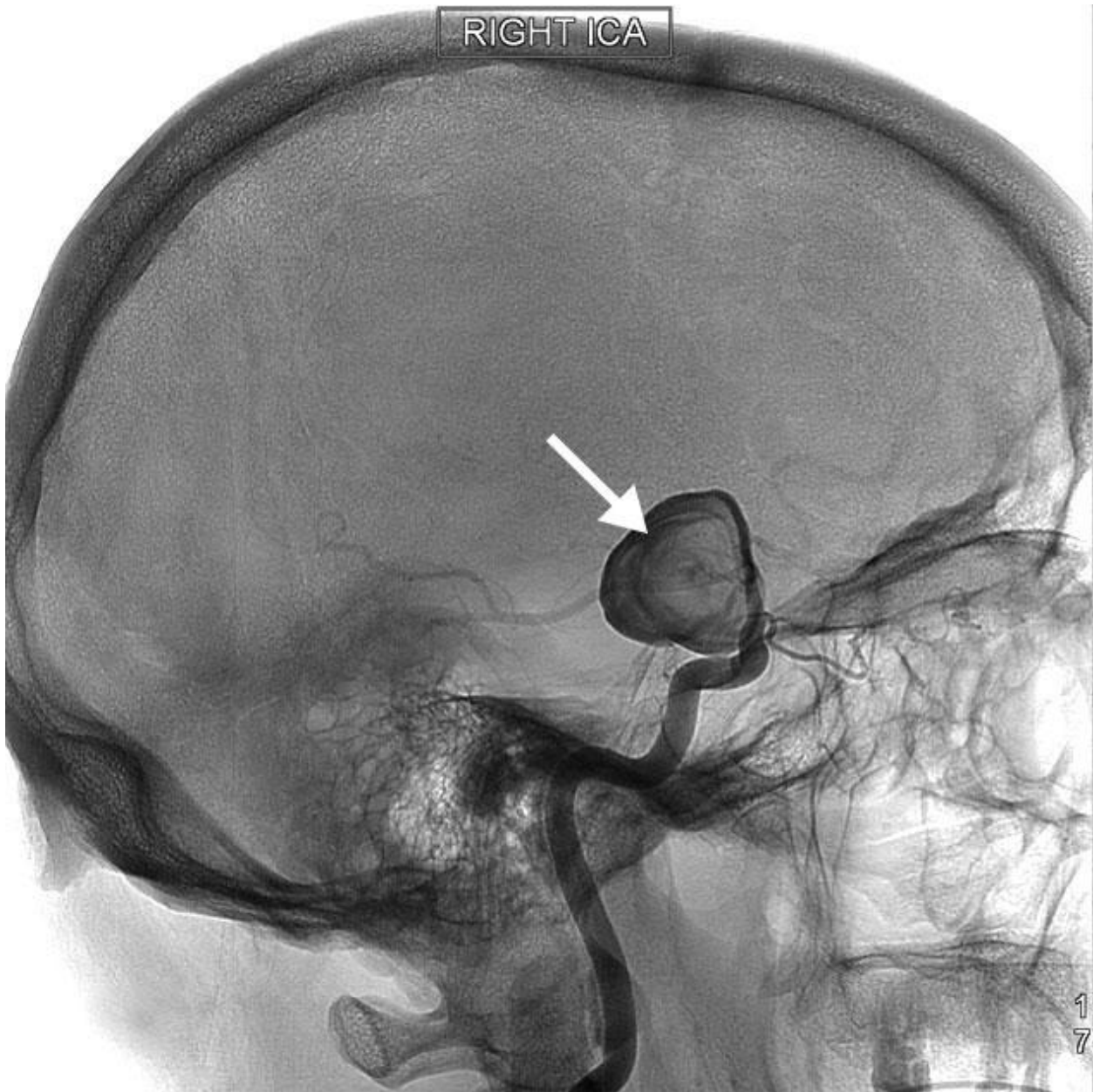
- f. Cerebral angiogram: This test shows a detailed image of the arteries within the brain and neck by using a catheter and injecting dye within the blood vessels to make them visible under X-rays

Mr. John: No





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Cerebral angiogram. The arrow is pointing towards the blood clot

- g. Echocardiogram: This test uses sound waves to give a detailed image of the heart and track clots within the heart that may have traveled to the brain

Mr. John: Yes



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Front of head



Damaged
brain tissue

Back of head

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PS: There are two types of stroke, an ischemic stroke (a stroke occurring when an artery in the brain is blocked by a blood clot), and a hemorrhagic stroke (a stroke occurring when an artery in the brain bursts ruptures). Do you recall which stroke did you have?

Mr. John: I was told that I had an Ischemic Stroke.

TD: What treatment and over the counter products were given to you?

Mr. John:



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Prescriptions:

Metoprolol 25 mg for heart and blood pressure

Amlodipine 5 mg to control elevated blood pressure

Glipizide 2.5 mg for control of diabetes

Clopidogrel 75 mg for my heart condition

Atorvastatin 40 mg for my elevated lipids

Losartan 25 mg to control my elevated blood pressure

Over the Counter:

Aspirin 81mg

Co Q-10 100 mg

Iron 65 mg

Vitamin D-3 1000 IU

Vitamin B-12 2500 mcg

RP: How long were you hospitalized?

Mr. John: Two days

PS: While being in the hospital were you mobilized or were you on complete bed rest immobilized? The reason I am asking is because if a patient is not mobilized quickly he or she could be a victim of DVT.

Mr. John: The first day I was immobilized, the second day I was told to walk.

TD: Did you sleep well, or did you have any problems? I ask this since sleep problems are fairly common after stroke and lead to memory loss issues as well as a slower recovery process.

Mr. John: I only get 3-4 hours of sleep at night. This is due to my past habit of staying awake for taking care of my wife. This habit has remained constant since then.

PS: I am going to list various complications on stroke, please let me know if you experienced any of the following.

1. Paralysis



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- Mr. John: Yes, I had paralysis on the left side
2. Disturbance in Walking
Mr. John: Yes
 3. Disturbances in Speech
Mr. John: Yes for about 3-4 Months
 4. Confusion
Mr. John: No
 5. Falling
Mr. John: No
 6. Loss of Memory
Mr. John: No

RP: How was your recovery from your attack of a stroke? Was it a quick recovery or a slow one?

Mr John: The recovery process took around six months, which I am told was a reasonable rate of recovery.

TD: Were you given physical therapy following your attack of stroke?

Mr John: No physical therapy was administered in the hospital. Physical therapy was given to me when I arrived home.

TD: What kind of physical therapy was prescribed to you?

Mr. John: I was given speech therapy, physical therapy of the legs to strengthen muscles and occupational therapy. Each therapist provided 8-10 exercises, in total about 24-30 exercises.

PS: How was your family affected by your thrombotic episode? The reason I am asking this question is because often a stroke patient is a responsibility of the entire family. The entire family needs to make some significant adjustments in life.

Yes, I observed that several of my family members had to modify their lifestyle:

1. Son: Reduced the amount of travel
2. Daughter in Law: She had to make my meals
3. Grandchild: He had to help with medicine management of my medications
4. Close Family and Friends: Close friends also pitched in to help our family.

RP: Mr John, what is your message to the community, both to the youth along with others which have undergone similar conditions as you?

Mr John: You should be particular about your health. You should eat a regular times, you should exercise regularly and keep your mind engaged. Take your medications at regular times as well. Never get angry and keep your temper low.



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RP: Did you know that us at GTF work with patients who have suffered from thrombotic events?

Mr John: Yes, I knew through my grandson, who is a member of GTF and participates in GTF activities.

PS: Thank you for allowing us to conduct this interview. We have learned so much from the opportunity such as your experience, the various medications that were prescribed to you both prescription and over the counter, and your recovery process.
