



Clinical stroke challenges

A practical approach

José G. Merino, MD

Cerebrovascular disease is the most common neurologic cause of death and disability worldwide and most practicing neurologists—regardless of subspecialty—evaluate and treat patients with stroke. When selecting topics for an issue of *Neurology® Clinical Practice* largely dedicated to stroke and vascular neurology, I sought papers that reviewed practical information on clinical challenges commonly faced by general neurologists in the wards and in the office. In addition, because neurologists play an increasingly important role in organizing stroke services at the local and regional level, I thought it necessary to include an article that discussed organizational innovations to stroke delivery services.

Four articles in this issue address clinical questions: How far should we search for a possible etiology in a patient with cryptogenic stroke? Will the results of the workup change management and decisions on stroke prevention? When should we suspect nonarterial etiologies for stroke? How aggressively should blood pressure be lowered in patients with acute ischemic and hemorrhagic stroke and for secondary stroke prevention? When should one consider a stroke in a newborn? Yaghi and Elkind¹ discuss the indication, diagnostic yield, and practical implications of intracranial vascular imaging, outpatient cardiac rhythm monitoring, transesophageal echocardiography, serum biomarkers, and other diagnostic tests in patients in whom the standard stroke workup failed to identify an etiology. In an article on cerebral venous thrombosis, Arauz and Barinagarrementeria² review the presentation, diagnostic approach, and management of this condition, and highlight the need to suspect cerebral vein thrombosis on specific patient populations. Bowry et al.³ discuss the results of recent clinical studies that can guide us when making practical decisions about blood pressure management in different clinical settings, including acute ischemic and hemorrhagic stroke and secondary stroke prevention. In a comprehensive review of arterial stroke in the newborn, Armstrong-Wells and Ferraro⁴ discuss the evaluation, treatment, and prevention of this condition among newborns. A fifth article by Tai et al.⁵ discusses innovative strategies for providing high-quality yet cost-effective care for stroke patients. This is an important topic because stroke systems of care have evolved over the past decade, with neurologists now assuming leadership roles in the administration of such services.

These articles highlight how far we have come in the targeted management of patients with stroke. I hope that practicing general and vascular neurologists will find them interesting and useful.

REFERENCES

1. Yaghi S, Elkind MSV. Cryptogenic stroke: a diagnostic challenge. *Neurol Clin Pract* 2014;4:386–393.
2. Barinagarrementeria F, Arauz A. Evaluation and management of a patient with possible cerebral venous thrombosis. *Neurol Clin Pract* 2014;4:394–401.
3. Bowry R, Navalkele DD, Gonzales NR. Blood pressure management in stroke: five new things. *Neurol Clin Pract* 2014;4:419–426.

Department of Neurology, Johns Hopkins Community Physicians, Bethesda, MD.

Funding information and disclosures are provided at the end of the article. Full disclosure form information provided by the author is available with the **full text of this article at Neurology.org/cp**.

Correspondence to: jmerino3@jhmi.edu

4. Armstrong-Wells J, Ferraro DM. Diagnosis and acute management of perinatal arterial ischemic stroke. *Neurol Clin Pract* 2014;4:378–385.
5. Tai WA, Conley J, Kalanithi L. Cost-saving innovations for acute ischemic stroke and transient ischemic attack. *Neurol Clin Pract* 2014;4:427–434.

STUDY FUNDING

No targeted funding reported.

DISCLOSURES

J.G. Merino serves on a DSMB of a PCORI-funded trial; has received speaker honoraria from the American Academy of Neurology; served as an Associate Editor for AAN.com, serves as a US Clinical Research Editor for *The BMJ* (for which he receives substantial salary support), and is Co-Editor of a blog for *Stroke*; and receives salary support from the Intramural Division of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke through a contract between National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke and Suburban Hospital. Full disclosure form information provided by the author is available with the **full text of this article at Neurology.org/cp**.

Get Clinical Practice Content Sooner

What you **do** know: *Neurology*® *Clinical Practice* publishes 6 times per year.

What you **might not** know: *Neurology*® *Clinical Practice* now publishes content **online ahead of print!**

- Get your message to our readers sooner
- Receive the latest clinical and health policy updates more often
- Sign up to receive **Publish Ahead of Print alerts**