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The significance of telemedicine network for neurosurgery in Slovenia

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The number of invasive procedures in medicine is increasing, as is the employment of new technological achievements. In the era of information-communication technology, one such achievement is also the telemedicine network. Telemedicine is defined as use of medical data, mostly in emergencies, which emergency services are sharing between themselves by using electronic communication and with the purpose to improve healthcare, health and educational services in outpatient and emergency situations. In Slovenia, it is known as the Telekap (TeleStroke) network, which was primarily designed for fast and efficient management of stroke patients. The Telekap has been considered to provide any patient with symptoms and signs consistent with acute neurosurgical pathology a quick expert clinical evaluation, a review of diagnostic findings, a diagnosis, decision making, emergency treatment recommendations and postoperative advice. In the neurosurgical community, the system is frequently used also for conveying vital information regarding subarachnoid haemorrhage and trauma. Particularly in neurosurgical emergencies, this communication system offers thorough information about the extent and location

of the bleeding and facilitates the preoperative planning of the neurosurgical intervention. Numerous factors have all contributed to optimal conditions for Telekap implementation in Slovenia, including the opportunity to improve access and quality of care, narrow window of time frame and treatment efficacy, the resources required for ground and helicopter medical transportation and the expansions and improvements of the medical care dedicated information-communication technology. As a result, the Telekap is being used extensively in the national health care and its use is still rising. From our experience so far, the system should be expanded to other neurocentres as well to all neurosurgery departments in order to facilitate patient management, their acute hospital care and inter-speciality collaboration.

Biography

Tomaz Velnar, MD, PhD is a neurosurgeon and assistant professor at Ljubljana Medical Centre. He is involved in tumour and vascular neurosurgery, as well as paediatric pathology, especially spina bifida operations, neuroendoscopy and craniostomies. He is also active in research, covering both preclinical and clinical fields.

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