

ORGANIZATION OF EPILEPSY CAMP IN RURAL & TRIBAL MAHARASHTRA

Problem Statement

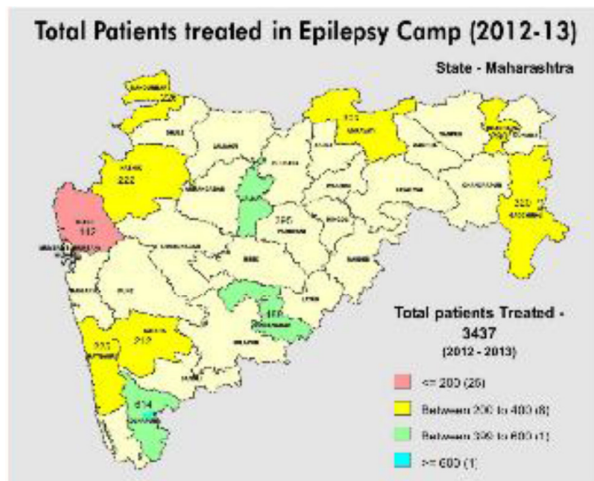
Epilepsy is a chronic non – communicable disorder of the brain that affects people of all ages. 50 million people worldwide have epilepsy of which nearly 80% reside in developing countries. Unfortunately, despite this high magnitude of affliction, almost 75% epileptics do not receive the requisite and timely treatment. Additionally, the family and patients bear the burden of being stigmatized and discriminated by the communities where they reside. Therefore epilepsy is one of the important, yet neglected public health concerns especially in a country like India. The School Health Examinations diagnosed nearly 5,000 students as epileptics in the past four years in Maharashtra. Considering the magnitude of the problem, the National Rural Health Mission, Maharashtra has undertaken an epilepsy campaign since April 2011, to ensure proper diagnosis, management and followup of such patients as well as generating community awareness regarding epilepsy.

Program Description

The NRHM Maharashtra has organized 21 epilepsy camps since April 2011. This initiative has two components – 1) At the patient level 2) At the community level.

At the patient level this initiative is undertaken so that proper diagnosis and treatment of epilepsy patients by neuro – surgeons and confirmation of the condition by specific tests such as EEG. This is followed by patient counselling, and provision of therapies such as occupational therapy, speech therapy and physio – therapy which helps in the overall well – being of the patient as well as mental stress associated with the disease. The initiative also provides free medicines for this chronic disease.

At the community level this initiative includes community awareness generation regarding the



Epilepsy Camp Awareness Program through Street Play



Epilepsy Camp Awareness Program through Street Play

disease. It envisages removing the misconceptions surrounding the disease as well as stigma associated with the disease in the community. During the camps, various IEC activities are undertaken towards this end including misconceptions, treatment and preventive measures.

Currently regular follow up of patients is being done by trained physicians and paediatricians.

Neuro – physicians have been appointed at a few places for follow up as per their availability.

Free medicines for three months are provided during the camps and necessary provision for follow up of medicines is made through NRHM.

These camps are organized with technical support and expertise from Epilepsy Foundation (NGO), Mumbai as a Public Private Partnership model.

Program Impact

S.No	Year	School Children Examined	Other Patients	Patients diagnosed with epilepsy	EEG tests performed	Patients provided counseling	O/ PT/ Speech Therapy
1	2011 - 12	870	1121	1991	386	306	-
2	2012 - 13	1852	1573	3435	586	273	868
3	2013 - 14	336	236	572	99	49	190
	Total	3068	2930	5998	1071	628	1048

Scalability

The model has successfully addressed a neglected chronic disease, which is associated with great stigma and discrimination through

a Public Private model. Such an initiative is replicable in other states with inclusion through innovative platforms to suit the local conditions.