

Empowering Patients and Communities in Neurosurgical Care: The Northwest General Hospital's Community Engagement and Involvement Program at Peshawar, Pakistan

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Abstract:

Introduction: The Community Engagement & Involvement (CEI) Program at Northwest General Hospital (NWGH), Peshawar, Pakistan, in collaboration with NIHR Cambridge, is aimed at empowering neurosurgical patients and their families/carers to actively participate in their care, contribute to research activities, receive emotional support, and advocate for improved healthcare services and resources. Through this initiative, NWGH has established two groups: the Patient Advocacy Group, comprising patients with neurosurgical conditions, and the Community Group, composed of family members and primary caregivers.

Methodology: Acknowledging the unique challenges encountered by neurosurgical patients and their family members, NWGH's CEI Program targets and recruit patients and families from diverse backgrounds, age groups, socioeconomic statuses. Regular meetings are arranged at NWGH where patients and their families are provided free medical consultations by expert neurosurgeons, travel expenses and refreshments while they participate in the scheduled activities.

Results: The Patient Advocacy Group entails activities such as open discussions, support, and information sessions to address their non-medical needs. The Community Group employs activities such as educational workshops and caregiver support sessions. Patients and their families provide valuable insights to improve healthcare services and research initiatives at NWGH through regular feedback sessions. They also act as collaborators in research projects and provide their input in research designs and dissemination of findings to their respective communities. Patients and their family members regularly participate in NWGH's public awareness seminars as keynote speakers on prevention of neurosurgical conditions particularly prevention of neurotrauma and spina bifida.

Conclusion: NWGH ensures to successfully integrate patient and community perspectives into decision-making processes through Community Advisory Board, stakeholder mapping, participatory methods, priority setting exercises and deliberative decision-making processes to improve outcomes for neurosurgical patients and their families.