

World head injury awareness day: need for decentralising care for accident victims

BENGALURU, DHNS: On an average, it takes 4.06 hours for head injury cases to reach a hospital in Bengaluru city resulting in death and other health complications.

A city-based neurosurgeon says that due to the delay, the patient misses the 'golden hour' which results in death and other health complications.

Speaking on the occasion of World Head Injury day, to be observed on March 20, Dr N K Venkataramana, neurosurgeon at Brains Hospital, said that there is a need to create awareness about the 'golden hour' and to decentralise treatment of accident victims.

Golden hour is the period from the time the accident occurs till the patient reaches the hospital and is stabilised. In most of the head injury cases, accident victim misses out on the 'golden hour' due to lack of coordination or no treatment at the right time.

"The moment the traffic police finds out the accident victim has suffered a head in-



A traffic policeman gives away a helmet to a motorcyclist as part of an event to raise awareness on the importance of using helmets. DH PHOTO/PRATHIKSHA M K

jury, the victim is blindly referred to NIMHANS hospital which is already burdened with many cases. Instead, the traffic police and the ambulances should send the victim to the nearest hospital where such facilities are available. We

need to decentralise treatment of accident victims," added Dr Venkataramana.

Dr G Gururaj, Head of WHO Collaborative Centre for Injury prevention at NIMHANS admitted that their hospital is already burdened. "We

need hospitals or even smaller medical centres catering to accident victims in peripheral areas of the city. All the head injury cases cannot be brought to Nimhans in time," he added.

Dismissing charges that they refer patients with head

injuries to NIMHANS, R Hitendra, Additional Commissioner of Police (Traffic) blames the doctors. "More than the police, the people around the accident spot take the victims in the ambulance to the nearest hospital. It is doctors at that hospital who refer the cases to NIMHANS," he added.

Dr R Narayan, deputy director, emergency response service, Department of Health and Family Welfare Services said they preferably advise the paramedics in the 108 ambulances to take the accident victims to a government hospital.

"I understand that accident victims should not miss the golden hour, but patient's financial condition also matters. If 108 ambulances take these victims to a private hospital and later they are billed with a hefty amount, then the patients question the ambulance services. We cannot make a hard and fast rule, but the staff in the ambulance give their best service at that moment," he added.