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Cochlear implant program in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, Dhaka, Bangladesh: An overview

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Statement of the Problem: General people in Bangladesh cannot afford Cochlear Implant due to high cost of the device. The availability of Cochlear Implant technology and services are also limited in the country. In this situation, Government of Bangladesh came forward to initiate a Cochlear Implant program in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, Dhaka. The target of the program was to distribute Cochlear Implant devices among deaf people and to accomplish surgery and AVT. Total 230 cases of cochlear implant surgeries were done till June 2018, of which 25 cases were done at their own cost.

Methods: The candidates applied for the device to a selection board. The board allotted cochlear implant device. In the first phase of the program, all the devices were given free of cost to candidates of lower income family. Since second phase of the program, devices were distributed on a cost sharing basis.

Findings: Since November 2011 to June 2018, 230 Cochlear Implant surgeries have been performed. Out of 230 cases, 214 were pre-lingual and 16 were post-lingual. The age of youngest implantee was one year 9 month and the oldest implantee was 54 years old. Five cases developed infection and out of which two cases needed explantation. One patient developed migration of receiver-stimulator from the well which was repositioned by a surgery. Six cases developed facial paralysis and out of them four recovered with conservative management.

Conclusion: Through this program, low income families are getting the opportunity of cochlear implant device and services. A cochlear implant program has been developed in a country like Bangladesh where the facilities for cochlear implant surgeries were limited earlier.

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