

## **World Federation for Neurorehabilitation Gulf Region Vice President Report**

Last two years has seen significant growth in Neurorehabilitation in Gulf region both in terms of expansion of services and academic activity.

The awareness about neurorehabilitation has steadily grown and patients and their families have now got an expectation that rehabilitation will be provided for afflictions such as stroke, brain and spinal cord injuries as well as other neurological conditions. This has resulted in increased demand for neurorehabilitation by patients and their families and there has been an expansion of services across the region. All Gulf region countries have developed good quality neurorehabilitation services. Some are very high quality and offer wide range of therapies provided by specially trained neurotherapists and robotic equipment. Neuromodulation treatments including repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation are being introduced. The number of neurorehabilitation specialist has grown in the region and there are now physician training programmes both in neurology and physical medicine and rehabilitation. Degree courses have also started for physical therapy, Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy. There has been a major development in provision of hyperacute and acute neurorehabilitation and the hospitals providing acute stroke services are required to offer rehabilitation as part of integrated stroke service. Home-based and community neurorehabilitation has also developed and large number of patients are now being treated in their own environment and communities. There has also been a steady development of telerehabilitation, particularly during Covid 19 pandemic.

Neurorehabilitation research is also steadily developing. Currently, most is centred around robotics and technological advances in neurorehabilitation. There is a large stroke project that is also underway in Abu Dhabi that should lead to standardization of all stroke services including rehabilitation through the stroke care continuum.

Over the last two years there have been several rehabilitation conferences with neurorehabilitation as main theme of most. Key ones include:

- MENA Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Congress Dubai 2018 / 2019
- PM&R conference as part of Arab Health Dubai 2020
- Neurorehabilitation and Disability Management Conference Abu Dhabi 2019
- 5<sup>th</sup> Kuwait Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Conference 2019
- Multiple Sclerosis Conference Abu Dhabi 2019
- Neuroscience updates on Neurorehabilitation 2018 and 2020 , Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi
- Masterclass in Spinal Cord Injury and Neural Tube Defects 2018 Abu Dhabi
- Botulinum Toxin Conference planned for November 2020

Besides there are regular seminars and symposia on neurorehabilitation topics.

In summary there has been significant development in Neurorehabilitation in Gulf region. Going forward I anticipate that services will become more specialized and condition specific centres for brain injury and spinal cord injury will develop.

Sabahat Asim Wasti  
VP Gulf Region

