

## Early Rehab, Early Recovery for Critically Ill



Early rehabilitation, early recovery was the message delivered by critical care specialists referring to patients in intensive care units (ICUs).

The advice applies to all ICU patients, even those on life support.

On the sidelines of the 9th Emirates Critical Care Conference (ECCC) held in Dubai, specialists said that early rehabilitation is an emerging science and is yet to be adopted as routine.

Held under the patronage of Shaikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Deputy Ruler of Dubai, UAE Minister of Finance and Chairman of the Dubai Health Authority (DHA), the three-day conference shed light on several issues in critical care including benefits of early rehabilitation and strengthening care of ICU patients.

Specialists said that patients who are admitted in ICUs for acute illnesses or injuries are at risk of experiencing a significant loss of functioning. When rehabilitation services like physical and occupational therapies are carried out as early as clinically possible, patient outcome is improved.

The understanding is early rehabilitation can help patients return to their previous activity levels sooner.

Towards this end the health care sector has to focus on rehabilitation strategies, they said.

The delay in rehabilitation can result in longer hospital stays, impacting both patient and cost.

Dr Waleed Jasem, Intensivist at Shaikh Khalifa Medical City (SKMC) and conference speaker, told Gulf News that early rehabilitation is an emerging science. "Newer studies are pointing out to the benefits of early rehabilitation, which isn't being carried out as routine. We are also trying to educate the medical community on increasing expertise in this field."

According to Dr Shaju Kareem, senior physiotherapist at Dubai Hospital and conference speaker, all ICU patients, whether suffering from fractures, lung disease, and those on life support devices, can benefit from early rehabilitation.

He said, "We are focusing on evidence-based practice, and how it can help the patient get back on his feet faster."

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