Stroke incidence and mortality on the decline

By ACSH Staff — July 16, 2014

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there are approximately 800,000 strokes each year, resulting in 130,000 deaths, making stroke the fourth leading killer in the United States. However, two new studies found that stroke deaths are on the decline.

Researchers led by Dr. Silvia Koton who is affiliated with both Tel Aviv University and the Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health, followed almost 16,000 individuals aged 45 to 64 from 1987 to 2011. These participants were part of the Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities cohort. According to the research published in JAMA [1], that incidence of stroke fell by an amazing 50 percent, while deaths from stroke fell by about 40 percent during that time period. Researchers attribute these declines to improvements in, especially, blood pressure control and treatment of elevated cholesterol, as well as improved medical care following strokes, and reductions in smoking rates. However, those under 65 did not see significant decreases in stroke incidence, likely due to increases in obesity and diabetes as well as diminished physical activity, and those over 65 did not see similar decreases in stroke mortality. Future research should focus on those two areas, according to study authors.

Similar reductions were also found by researchers led by Dr. Margaret C. Fang of the University of California, San Francisco, as reported in [2] The American Journal of Medicine. They used data from the Medicare Provider Analysis and Review to identify individuals ages 65 or older who had been hospitalized for stroke between 1988 and 2008, and found that rate per 100,000 of first stroke decreased by about 40 percent over the 20-year period.

According to Dr. Ralph Sacco of the University of Miami, who co-wrote an editorial accompanying the JAMA piece, The keys to brain health and to fewer strokes for young and old, black and white, are to know your numbers, your blood pressure and cholesterol, and get treated if you can t get them under control with lifestyle management.

ACSH s Dr. Gil Ross added this: These reports are quite gratifying, and are in keeping with the overall decline in cardiovascular disease of all types over the past few decades, both incident and
mortality. Complacency however is inappropriate: there are still far too many Americans with elevated blood pressure who are either not being diagnosed, or not having their BP controlled. And the number of us on lipid-lowering therapy is also well below optimal, so further improvements are there for the taking but taking will be hard work.

Source URL: https://www.acsh.org/news/2014/07/16/stroke-incidence-mortality-decline

Links