

HEALTH NEWS

Stroke Is The Least Of Americans' Worries

(NAPSA)—If you asked 1,000 people what health condition worries them most, how many would say stroke? The answer is one percent. Stroke is America's number three killer and a serious cause of long-term disability, yet few Americans worry about it.

"Stroke is still not a health priority for the general public," said Vladimir Hachinski, M.D., editor-in-chief of *Stroke: Journal of the American Heart Association*. "Until this changes, we can expect to see present patterns continue: lack of knowledge about stroke warning signs; lack of emergency action when they occur; lack of commitment to reduce stroke factors; and of course, lack of progress in reducing disability."

The survey's results prompted the American Stroke Association to increase its efforts in May, American Stroke Month, to encourage Americans to become more aware of their risk and how to prevent stroke.

The American Stroke Association will also continue to provide healthcare professionals with protocols to improve stroke treatment, educate medical students about stroke, and promote stroke guidelines to ensure proper care of stroke survivors.

The American Stroke Association urges people to call 9-1-1 in response to stroke because stroke is a medical emergency. A medication can help reduce long-term disability from the most common form of stroke, but it must be administered within three hours from the onset of stroke symptoms. Every minute counts.

The symptoms of stroke are:

- sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arms and legs, especially on one side of the body;



Learning the warning signs of stroke and taking quick action can make the difference between life and death.

- sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding;
- sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes;
- sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination;
- sudden severe headache with no known cause.

Stroke accounted for about one of every 14.3 deaths in the U.S. in 1999. In the U.S. someone has a stroke every 53 seconds and someone dies of one every 3.1 minutes.

A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that brings oxygen and nutrients to the brain bursts or is clogged by a blood clot or other particle. This rupture or blockage keeps part of the brain from getting the oxygen it needs. Without oxygen, nerve cells in the affected area can't function and die within minutes. The part of the body that these brain cells control also can't function, which can lead to death.

Find out your risk of stroke by visiting StrokeAssociation.org and take a Stroke Pledge. To learn more about stroke, call the American Stroke Association at 1-888-4-STROKE.



Note to Editors: May is American Stroke Month.