

Women And Stroke: How Much Do You Know?

(NAPSA)—While more women than men have strokes, the leading cause of disability and third-leading cause of death in the United States, a new national survey conducted by HealthyWomen, the nation's leading independent health information source for women, found that many may be dramatically underestimating their risk.

Leean Hendrix did.

At age 26, the former Miss Arizona



was talking to her friend when she suddenly realized her speech had become incomprehensible. Concerned, she looked in the mirror and realized the right

side of her face

Leean Hendrix

was drooping. She knew immediately something was wrong.

"When I went to the hospital, I learned I had suffered a stroke. I never thought it would happen to me," said Leean. "I was young, healthy and in shape."

According to the survey of 2,000 women, which was conducted in partnership with the National Stroke Association and the American College of Emergency Physicians by Harris Interactive, 40 percent of women said they were only somewhat or not at all concerned about experiencing a stroke in their lifetime. Furthermore, although women are twice as likely to die from stroke as breast cancer, the survey found that women believed breast cancer to be five times more prevalent than stroke.

"The results of the survey underscore what we see too often with women when it comes to dealing with their unique health issues," said Elizabeth Battaglini Cahill, RN, executive director of HealthyWomen. "As they put the health of family members and everyone else first, they often underestimate their own risks and ignore warning signs of serious health problems like stroke."

An acute ischemic stroke occurs when an obstruction, such as a blood clot, blocks blood flow to the brain. The obstruction deprives

F ACE	Facial droop Uneven smile
A RM	Arm numbness Arm weakness
S PEECH	Slurred speech Difficulty speaking or understanding
T IME	Call 911 and get to the hospital immediately.

the brain of blood and oxygen, destroying valuable nerve cells in the affected area within minutes.

"Stroke knows no gender and can happen to anyone at any age," said Marilyn Rymer, M.D., director of the Brain and Stroke Institute at Saint Luke's Hospital in Kansas City. "Given the prevalence of stroke in women, it is especially critical for women to understand the risk factors and symptoms."

Only 27 percent of women surveyed could name more than two of the six primary stroke symptoms. F-A-S-T is an easy way to recognize if you or a loved one is having a stroke and take action.

"If you experience any of the symptoms of a stroke, it is imperative to call 9-1-1 so you receive immediate medical attention, even if the symptoms go away," said Angela Gardner, M.D., president of the American College of Emergency Physicians. "Time equals brain; for every minute the brain is deprived of oxygen, it may lose up to 1.9 million brain cells. If you are having even one of the symptoms of stroke, come to the emergency department so we can evaluate and treat you."

Because of her stroke, Leean has no memories of her high school days. However, she's using her experience to educate others. "I am living proof that a stroke really can happen to anyone and I urge all women to take control of their health and learn the signs and risk factors for stroke."

For more information about women and stroke and this survey, visit www.healthywomen.org. Support for the survey was provided by Genentech, Inc., a wholly owned member of the Roche Group.