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2009 Stroke Fact Sheet

Stroke Statistics (United States)

- Stroke is the third leading cause of death behind diseases of the heart and cancer; and a leading cause of serious, long-term disability.
- Stroke accounts for one of every 17 deaths in the United States.
- On average, every 40 seconds someone in the United States suffers a stroke.
- Each year about 795,000 experience a new or recurrent stroke. About 600,000 of these are first attacks, and 185,000 are recurrent attacks.
- Stroke mortality of 2005 was 143,579 (56,586 males and 86,993 female).
- Each year about 55,000 more women than men have a stroke.
- The estimated direct and indirect cost of stroke for 2009 is \$68.9 billion.

What is a Stroke?

- A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that brings oxygen and nutrients to the brain either bursts (hemorrhagic stroke) or is clogged by a blood clot or some other mass (ischemic stroke). When a rupture or blockage occurs, parts of the brain don't get the blood and oxygen they need. Without oxygen, nerve cells in the affected area of the brain can't work properly, and die within minutes. And when nerve cells can't work, the part of the body they control can't work either. The devastating effects of a severe stroke are often permanent because dead brain cells aren't replaced.

Stroke Types

- *Ischemic Stroke*: Ischemic stroke is the most common type. It accounts for about 87 percent of all strokes. It occurs when a blood clot (thrombus) forms and blocks blood flow in an artery bringing blood to part of the brain. Blood clots usually form in arteries damaged by fatty buildups, called atherosclerosis.
- *Hemorrhagic Stroke*
 - *Intracerebral Hemorrhage* (10 percent of all strokes): A cerebral hemorrhage occurs when a defective artery in the brain bursts, flooding the surrounding tissue with blood.
 - *Subarachnoid hemorrhage* (3 percent of all strokes): A subarachnoid hemorrhage occurs when a blood vessel on the brain's surface ruptures and bleeds into the space between the brain and the skull (but not into the brain itself).

What is a TIA (transient ischemic attack) or “mini-stroke?”

- A TIA is a "warning stroke" or "mini-stroke" that produces stroke-like symptoms but no lasting damage. Recognizing and treating TIAs can reduce your risk of a major stroke.

Most strokes aren't preceded by TIAs. However, of the people who've had one or more TIAs, more than a third will later have a stroke. In fact, a person who's had one or more TIAs is more likely to have a stroke than someone of the same age and sex who hasn't.

TIAs are important in predicting if a stroke will occur rather than when one will happen. They can occur days, weeks or even months before a major stroke. In about half the cases, the stroke occurs within one year of the TIA.

Stroke Warning Signs

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- 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 Risk Factors:

- *Controllable risk factors* include high blood pressure, smoking, elevated cholesterol, obesity, physical inactivity, diabetes, carotid or other artery disease, other heart disease and sickle cell disease.
- *Uncontrollable risk factors* include age, gender, race/ethnicity, family history, prior stroke or TIA (mini-stroke).