PERCEPTION OF STROKE RISK AND HEALTH CARE FOLLOW-UP IN AT-RISK WOMEN

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BACKGROUND
Stroke is the third leading cause of morbidity and mortality in men and women, behind heart disease and cancer. Although men experience a higher incidence of stroke, women have poorer outcomes and the unique risk factors of pregnancy and hormone therapy (1). A midlife stroke surge was recently documented in women ages 45 to 54, which may be due to an increase in risk factors in this population (2,3). Women experience higher mortality after stroke than men. Gender differences in the management have been documented, with women experiencing greater emergency department wait times and less diagnostic testing (4).

OBJECTIVES
To understand the perception of risk of stroke in middle-age women with at least one risk factor for stroke. To understand knowledge of stroke in this population so that future health campaigns can be appropriately targeted. Parameters related to access of care will also be examined.

RESULTS
Women were asked to identify their perceived risk for stroke on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 representing "very high risk" and 1 meaning "very low risk." They also characterized other women's risk, their frequency of worry about stroke, and the perceived overall health.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS
These results suggest several points of focus for future interventions:
1) Focusing on discus subgroup as an point of intervention for increasing stroke awareness. For example, interventions could be designed for women with atrial fibrillation, coronary artery disease or other groups that may already perceive a lower risk for stroke.
2) Using creative waiting room strategies to increase awareness and knowledge about stroke. This could include national risk-factor questionnaires to be collected by the public.
3) Thinking about access to care and how is it a barrier to primary prevention.
4) Addressing how health behavior and risk perception affect health outcomes in women.

REFERENCES

METHODS
Primary prevention parameters:
- 13.7% of hypertensive patients report inadequate blood pressure control (10). (10)
- 37.9% of diabetic patients report inadequate glucose control (9).
- 31.7% of hypertensive patients report inadequate hypertension control (5).
- 61.4% of women report taking a daily ASA.
- 22.2% of women report having a cardiovascular reporting to a women's group.

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