

Depressed stroke survivors may face triple the risk of death

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People who are depressed after a stroke may have a tripled risk of dying early and four times the risk of death from stroke than people who have not experienced a stroke or depression, according to a study released today that will be presented at the American Academy of Neurology's 65th Annual Meeting in San Diego, March 16 to 23, 2013.

"Up to one in three people who have a stroke develop depression," said study author Amytis Towfighi, MD, with the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California and Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center in Los Angeles, and a member of the American Academy of Neurology. "This is something [family members](#) can help watch for that could potentially save their loved one."

Towfighi noted that similar associations have been found regarding depression and [heart attack](#), but less is known about the association between stroke, depression and death.

The research included 10,550 people between the ages of 25 and 74 followed for 21 years. Of those, 73 had a stroke but did not develop depression, 48 had stroke and depression, 8,138 did not have a stroke or depression and 2,291 did not have a stroke but had depression.

After considering factors such as age, gender, race, education, income level and [marital status](#), the risk of dying from any cause was three times higher in individuals who had stroke and depression compared to those who had not had a stroke and were not depressed. The risk of dying

from stroke was four times higher among those who had a stroke and were depressed compared to people who had not had a stroke and were not depressed.

"Our research highlights the importance of screening for and [treating depression](#) in people who have experienced a stroke," said Towfighi.

"Given how common depression is after stroke, and the potential [consequences](#) of having depression, looking for signs and symptoms and addressing them may be key."

Provided by American Academy of Neurology

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