

New study could help stroke victims

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A University of Leicester study could help to provide a new lease of life for patients who have suffered a stroke.

The research published in the *American Journal of Hypertension* confirms the safety of a drug, Lisinopril, that lowers their blood pressure- without reducing the blood flow to the brain.

Now a larger Leicester trial is under way to investigate the drug's benefits for victims of strokes.

Dr David Eveson, of the Department of Cardiovascular Sciences at the University of Leicester, said: "High blood pressure is common immediately after a stroke. Stroke patients with high blood pressure tend to have a worse outcome than those with normal blood pressure and therefore it may be helpful to lower blood pressure immediately after stroke.

"However, trials to date have shown variable results, probably because treatment was either started too late or the wrong drug was used.

"The ACE inhibitor class of blood pressure lowering drugs, of which Lisinopril is a member, have been shown in studies to lower blood pressure but preserve the blood flow to the brain which may be all important after stroke. This study compared the use of blood pressure lowering with Lisinopril versus placebo treatment within a few hours of acute stroke in patients presenting to University Hospitals Leicester. The results showed that blood pressure was effectively lowered in the treated

group and this did not result in any adverse outcome in comparison with placebo.

"The study was too small to demonstrate any benefit but it did confirm safety and thus a larger Leicester-based trial (CHHIPS) is under way to see if this treatment can be of benefit to patients."

Dr Eveson added: "Stroke is the second commonest cause of death in the UK and the commonest cause of adult disability. It is imperative that we strive to discover new treatments for stroke to reduce the substantial impact of this disease.

"This study evaluates, for the first time, an established blood pressure lowering drug immediately after stroke and confirms its safety in this group, thereby paving the way for larger studies to discover if it may benefit patients."

Source: University of Leicester

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