

Women have a poorer quality of life after a stroke than men, study reveals

September 28 2007

A new University of Nottingham study has found that women have a poorer quality of life than men following a stroke.

The study, funded by The Stroke Association, is to be published in the journal *Stroke* and explores whether differences in gender can affect a person's quality of life following a stroke. The study was undertaken by Professor Philip Bath and colleagues at The University of Nottingham.

Dr Isabel Lee, of The Stroke Association, said: “We already know that women tend to have an increased level of disability following a stroke than men and this often means that they are more dependent on others.

“Yet the quality of someone's life following a stroke is influenced by many factors and disability is just one of these.”

The study looked at 1,268 patients and quality of life was measured six months after stroke. Quality of life was measured across eight different areas which were: physical functioning, physical role, bodily pain, general health, vitality, social functioning, emotional role and mental health. Each of these areas were compared by sex.

The study showed that women consistently reported lower quality of life than men and this was particularly noticeable in physical functioning and mental health.

Dr Lee said: “The reason for this outcome could be that women and men

cope and adapt in different ways. In some illnesses there is a clear distinction between the impact on the sexes, but this is an area that has not been fully explored with stroke.”

Professor Philip Bath, who led the research, said: “Another possible explanation could be down to the individual's place of residence six months after their stroke. More women reside in nursing homes than men and quality of life is likely to be less well rated in an institution than at home.”

He concludes: “It is important to recognise that stroke affects all aspects of a patient's life and further research needs to be done to find out why women seem to have a lower quality of life after a stroke than men.

“We need to look at ways of improving quality of life for all stroke survivors and so it is important that clinical trials for new treatments of stroke assess for this as well as disability.”

Source: University of Nottingham

Citation: Women have a poorer quality of life after a stroke than men, study reveals (2007, September 28) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2007-09-women-poorer-quality-life-men.html>

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