

# Study: Secondary stroke prevention needs improvement

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New research finds that one out of 12 people who have a stroke will likely soon have another stroke, and one out of four will likely die within one year. Researchers say the findings highlight the vital need for better secondary stroke prevention. The study is published in the February 16, 2010, issue of *Neurology*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology.

For the study, scientists searched a state hospital discharge database and identified 10,399 people in South Carolina with an average age of 69 who had a [stroke](#) in 2002. Of the participants, 23 percent were younger than 65 years old at the time of the initial stroke. Eighteen percent went on to have a [recurrent stroke](#) within four years. The study also included the number of heart attacks or deaths within this time period.

The study found 25 percent of people who had a stroke died within one year and eight percent of people had another stroke within one year. The risk for both events rose steadily after one year. The cumulative risk at the end of four years, for example, was: 18.1 percent for recurrent stroke, 6.2 percent for heart attack, 41.3 percent for death by any cause, 26.7 percent for vascular death and 52.5 percent for combined events, any recurrent stroke, heart attack or death, whichever occurred first.

"Furthermore, the risk of recurrent stroke was between three and six times higher than the risk of heart attack at different points during the study," said author Wuwei (Wayne) Feng, MD, MS, with the Department of Neuroscience at the Medical University of South

Carolina. "Our findings suggest that South Carolina and possibly other parts of the United States may have a long way to go in preventing and reducing the risk factors for recurrent strokes."

The risk of a recurrent stroke, [heart attack](#) or death was higher for African-Americans compared to Caucasians and also increased with age and number of other disorders in addition to stroke itself.

Provided by American Academy of Neurology

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