

Fame doesn't protect movie stars from stroke risk

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In this 1992 publicity image originally released by TriStar Pictures, actress Sharon Stone portrays Catherine Tramell in a scene from "Basic Instinct." Several movie stars, including Stone, have suffered strokes, a reminder that money and fame can't insulate you from a health risk that much can be done to prevent, researchers reported at an international stroke conference in Feb. 2011. (AP Photo/TriStar Pictures, Ralph Nelson, file)

(AP) -- Hollywood trivia quiz: What do Sharon Stone, Dudley Moore, James Garner and Elizabeth Taylor have in common besides an Oscar nomination? All have suffered strokes, a reminder that money and fame can't insulate you from a health risk that much can be done to prevent, researchers said Thursday.

The International [Stroke](#) Conference is being held in Tinseltown for the first time, just three weeks before this year's Oscars are to be awarded. So researchers at the University of California at Los Angeles had the idea to check movie stars' rates of heart attacks and strokes.

"We see the diseases that ravage them just as they ravage the rest of the country and the world," said Dr. Jeffrey Saver, director of the stroke center at UCLA. He has treated several Hollywood glitterati who suffered strokes.

The movie industry did wrong for many years by glamorizing smoking, a big contributor to [stroke risk](#), he said. Paradoxically, it is now helping to make obesity unattractive, he said - celluloid is not kind to cellulite.

For their study, researchers searched the Internet and a [movie industry](#) database to compile a list of all best actor/actress nominees since the Oscars began in 1927 through 2009.

Of the 409 nominees, at least 29 have suffered strokes - 6 were fatal - and 39 have had heart attacks. Stroke sufferers were 35 on average when nominated and 67 when stricken.

It put a dent in their careers - film and TV appearances fell 73 percent in the three years after a stroke and 69 percent after a heart attack, said study coordinator Hannah Smith of UCLA.

And not all were old when stricken.

The sexy actress Sharon Stone, nominated for an Oscar in 1996 for "Casino" and known for her roles in "Total Recall," "Basic Instinct" and "Catwoman," suffered a stroke in 2001 at age 43. Hers was a subarachnoid hemorrhage, a type of "bleeding stroke" that is less common than those caused by a blood clot.

A few years ago she appeared in a public service video to raise awareness of stroke symptoms (sudden numbness, weakness, vision or speech problems, confusion, sudden headache with no known cause).

"Stroke can affect anyone," said Dr. Ralph Sacco, American Heart Association president and a neurologist at the University of Miami. "When Hollywood stars have strokes, it brings it even more into the consciousness of the public."

This year's Oscars ceremony is Feb. 27.

Those who suffered strokes and their most recent best actor/actress nomination from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences are:

- Ruth Chatterton, 1930, "Sarah and Son"
- Mary Pickford, 1930, "Coquette"
- Bette Davis, 1963, "What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?"
- Claudette Colbert, 1945, "Since You Went Away"
- Merle Oberon, 1936, "The Dark Angel"
- Gladys George, 1937, "Valiant is the Word for Carrie"
- Robert Donat, 1940, "Goodbye, Mr. Chips"
- James Cagney, 1956, "Love Me or Leave Me"
- Greer Garson, 1961, "Sunrise at Campobello"
- Cary Grant, 1945, "None But the Lonely Heart"

- Walter Pidgeon, 1944, "Madame Curie"
- Jean Arthur, 1944, "The More the Merrier"
- Celia Johnson, 1947, "Brief Encounter"
- Gene Kelly, 1946, "Anchors Away"
- Anne Baxter, 1951, "All About Eve"
- Broderick Crawford, 1950, "All the King's Men"
- Kirk Douglas, 1957, "The Lust for Life"
- Julie Harris, 1953, "The Member of the Wedding"
- Burt Lancaster, 1982, "Atlantic City"
- Richard Burton, 1978, "Anne of the Thousand Days"
- Grace Kelly, 1955, "The Country Girl"
- Anthony Franciosa, 1958, "A Hatful of Rain"
- Elizabeth Taylor, 1967, "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?"
- Patricia Neal, 1969, "The Subject Was Roses"
- Edith Evans, 1968, "The Whisperers"
- Dudley Moore, 1982, "Arthur"
- James Garner, 1986, "Murphy's Romance"

-Sharon Stone, 1996, "Casino"

-Samantha Morton, 2004, "In America"

More information:

Stroke meeting: <http://www.strokeconference.org>

Oscars: <http://www.oscars.org>

Internet Movie Database: <http://www.imdb.com>

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