

Increasing percentage of patients aware of link between atrial fibrillation and stroke

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(Medical Xpress)—Findings from a recent American Heart Association/American Stroke Association survey noted the increased awareness in patients suffering from atrial fibrillation and the correlation between this condition and stroke.

[Atrial fibrillation](#), or AFib, is a quivering or [irregular heartbeat](#) that affects about 2.7 million Americans, putting them at higher risk of suffering from other [cardiovascular conditions](#) including stroke – the number 4 killer in the United States.

In 2011, over 500 patients with atrial fibrillation were surveyed and half of these were unaware of their heightened risk of stroke. One year later, another poll targeting 500 AFib patients was conducted and their knowledge of the five-fold risk of potentially suffering a stroke had improved to 64 percent, highlighting the rise in patient education and overall understanding of atrial fibrillation.

"The fact that 64 percent of AFib patients are aware that they have a five times greater risk of having a stroke is great step in the right direction," said Patrick Ellinor, Ph. D., spokesperson for the [American Heart Association](#)/American Stroke Association, Associate Professor at Harvard Medical School and [Cardiologist](#) at Massachusetts General Hospital. "The American Heart Association/American Stroke Association works to provide [healthcare providers](#), patients and caregivers the educational tools and resources they need on this very important topic. We hope to report a higher percentage annually until

we reach 100 percent."

The survey also found that 82 percent of AFib patients believe that having atrial fibrillation increases their risk for stroke, an increase from 75 percent in 2011.

Most atrial fibrillation patients trust and rely on their healthcare professionals for information on AFib and education on their [health risks](#). Of the patients surveyed, two-thirds of AFib patients have discussed their risk for stroke with their healthcare professional, but only about one-third were told they are at high risk for stroke.

To learn more on the effects of atrial fibrillation, the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association has developed a new motion graphic that animates AFib facts, how it can be detected and encourages patients to speak with their healthcare provider. This motion graphic, and additional information on atrial fibrillation, can be found online by visiting www.heart.org/afib.

Provided by American Heart Association

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