

Having a stroke may shave nearly three out of five quality years off your life

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Stroke treatments and prevention to improve quality of life for people who experience a stroke is poorer than researchers hoped, with stroke still taking nearly three out of five quality years off a person's life, according to a new study published in the October 9, 2013, online issue of *Neurology*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology.

Researchers say the findings leave considerable room for improvement in [stroke treatment](#).

Stroke is the leading cause of adult disability and the fourth-leading cause of death in the United States.

"These results highlight the severe toll that stroke takes on millions of people every year," said study author Peter M. Rothwell, FMedSci, a professor with the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, United Kingdom. "This is the first study since the 1990s to look at long-term quality of [life](#) after stroke and transient ischemic attack (TIA)."

For the study, 748 people who experienced stroke and 440 who had a TIA were followed for five years and given questionnaires that measured quality of life and utility, which places a numerical value on the desirability of various [health](#) outcomes. These values, which were based on responses from members of the general public, range from "worse than death" to "perfect health." Participants were compared to an age-matched control group. These types of measures are increasingly used to

determine the cost-effectiveness of new treatments.

The study determined the five-year quality-adjusted life years for the participants, calculated by multiplying the time spent in a health state by the value assigned to that particular health state. For example, the study found that out of a possible five years of perfect health, people who had a stroke lost 1.71 years due to earlier death and another 1.08 years due to a reduced quality of life, resulting in a reduction of 2.79 quality-adjusted life years. The results varied greatly depending on severity of the stroke, with those having a [minor stroke](#) experiencing 2.06 fewer quality-adjusted life years; moderate, 3.35 years; and severe, 4.3 quality years. People who had TIAs had 1.68 fewer quality-adjusted life years.

"Our study should serve as a wake-up call that we need more funding and research for stroke treatments and secondary stroke prevention measures to improve quality of life in [stroke](#) survivors," said Rothwell.

Provided by American Academy of Neurology

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