

Study links severe restless legs syndrome to increased risk of stroke

June 8 2015



Micrograph showing cortical pseudolaminar necrosis, a finding seen in strokes on medical imaging and at autopsy. H&E-LFB stain. Credit: Nephron/Wikipedia

A new study suggests that increased restless legs syndrome (RLS) severity is associated with subsequent increased risk of stroke.

Results show that increased RLS severity is associated with subsequent increased risk of stroke, after considering other known risk factors such

as age, smoking, hypertension, and unhealthy diet. There were 161 incident stroke cases during the six-year follow-up.

"We were surprised at the importance of taking into account RLS severity—it was only severe RLS, not milder RLS, that was associated with increased risk of stroke," said principal investigator and senior author Xiang Gao, associate professor and Director, Nutritional Epidemiology Lab, department of Nutritional Sciences at The Pennsylvania State University in University Park, Pa.

The research abstract was published recently in an online supplement of the journal *Sleep* and will be presented Monday, June 8, in Seattle, Washington, at SLEEP 2015, the 29th annual meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies LLC.

The study group comprised 72,916 female registered nurses ages 41-58 years in 2005, free of diabetes, [stroke](#), and pregnancy at the baseline. Information on RLS was collected via a questionnaire which was based on International RLS Study Group criteria.

More information: Abstract Title: Restless Leg Syndrome is Associated with Subsequent Development of Stroke: A Prospective Study of the Nurses Health Study II Cohort

Abstract ID: 0710

Presentation Date: Monday, June 8

Presentation Type: Oral

Presentation Time: 2 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.

Provided by American Academy of Sleep Medicine

Citation: Study links severe restless legs syndrome to increased risk of stroke (2015, June 8)

retrieved 2 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-06-links-severe-restless-legs-syndrome.html>

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