

How much does African-American race play a role in stroke risk?

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Even though young African-Americans are at three times greater risk of a first stroke than their white counterparts, they may not be at a higher risk for a second stroke, according to a study published in the January 20, 2016, online issue of *Neurology*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology. The study is one of the first of its kind to look at race and second stroke risk.

"The interaction between black [race](#) and age appears to be remarkably different for the risk of first versus second [stroke](#)," said study author George Howard, DrPH, with the University of Alabama at Birmingham. "There was very little difference in race for the risk of a second stroke."

The study involved 29,682 people from the REasons for Geographic And Racial Differences in Stroke (REGARDS) study. Of those, 2,993 people had a history of stroke at the start of the study. Over the seven years of the study, 301 of them had a second stroke. Of the 26,689 people who had never had a stroke when the study began, 818 people experienced a first stroke during the study.

The researchers found that among those without a stroke at the start of the study, African-Americans were 2.7 times more likely to have a stroke than the white participants at age 45, however, there was no difference at age 85. Race did not appear to increase second stroke risk for African-American participants at any [age](#).

"Almost all of the 'traditional' [risk factors](#) for a first stroke proved to

also be a risk factor for a second stroke, suggesting that controlling these risk factors may help avoid both conditions," said Howard. "These risk factors include heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, smoking, irregular heartbeat and others."

Provided by American Academy of Neurology

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