

After stroke, most patients prefer video conferencing for communication with doctors

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Nearly 6 in 10 stroke patients of all ages would prefer to follow up with their physicians after hospital discharge with a video call rather than a traditional phone call, according to new findings from Northwell Health neurologists.

The research, being presented at the International Stroke Conference in Los Angeles Feb. 17-19, 2016, also indicates that younger [stroke patients](#) 55 and younger would unanimously embrace the use of telemedicine—a growing trend nationwide—for close post-stroke communication, which is shown to be crucial for medication compliance and patient satisfaction.

The study was co-authored by Paul Wright, M.D., chair of Neurology at North Shore University Hospital and Long Island Jewish Medical Center, and Jeffrey M. Katz, M.D., chief of Neurovascular Services and director of the Stroke Center at North Shore University Hospital, both members of Northwell Health. In addition to Dr. Wright and Dr. Katz, co-authors of the study included medical student Fred Cohen, Michele Gribko, MS, RN and Jackie McCarthy, MS.

"With technology as advanced as it is, we wanted to know if [patients](#) would be happier getting on a face-to-face call with a healthcare professional as opposed to a telephone call," Dr. Wright said. "This technology could help us get as much information as possible from our patients and provide a service to the community in a very timely, easily accessible manner."

"People like seeing their physicians face-to-face, and a telephone call is obviously less personal," agreed Dr. Katz. "It's also better to be able to see our patients because we learn a lot by looking at someone. We're not just getting information from their voice. As they say, a picture's worth a thousand words."

In the new study, 52 stroke patients of all ages were asked if a video or phone call would be their preferred post-hospitalization method of communicating with their attending physician. Thirty (nearly 58 percent) requested a video call, while 22 (42.3 percent) requested a phone call.

But among patients age 55 and younger, all 14 said they'd prefer a video call. In patients 65 and younger, 19 of 27 (more than 70 percent) would opt for a [video call](#).

While age appeared to influence the preference for video calls, Dr. Wright noted that increasing numbers of seniors are becoming computer-savvy and their adult children are often willing to help install video conferencing software and apps—such as Skype or Facetime—on their parents' computers and smart phones.

Video calls might potentially reduce hospital readmissions after stroke, helping patients and physicians iron-out any confusion over medication use and visually track a patient's overall appearance, as well as, any errant physical symptoms.

"We could certainly see another phase of our study going forward in patients who express a preference for video calls to determine, on our end, if there's really a medical benefit," Dr. Katz said.

Dr. Wright said hospitals might want to consider installing video conferencing rooms for patients and physicians, which can also be utilized to communicate with outside physicians referring transfer

patients.

"There's so much further we can go with this, and it's exciting," Dr. Wright added. "There's a surprising demand."

Provided by Northwell Health

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