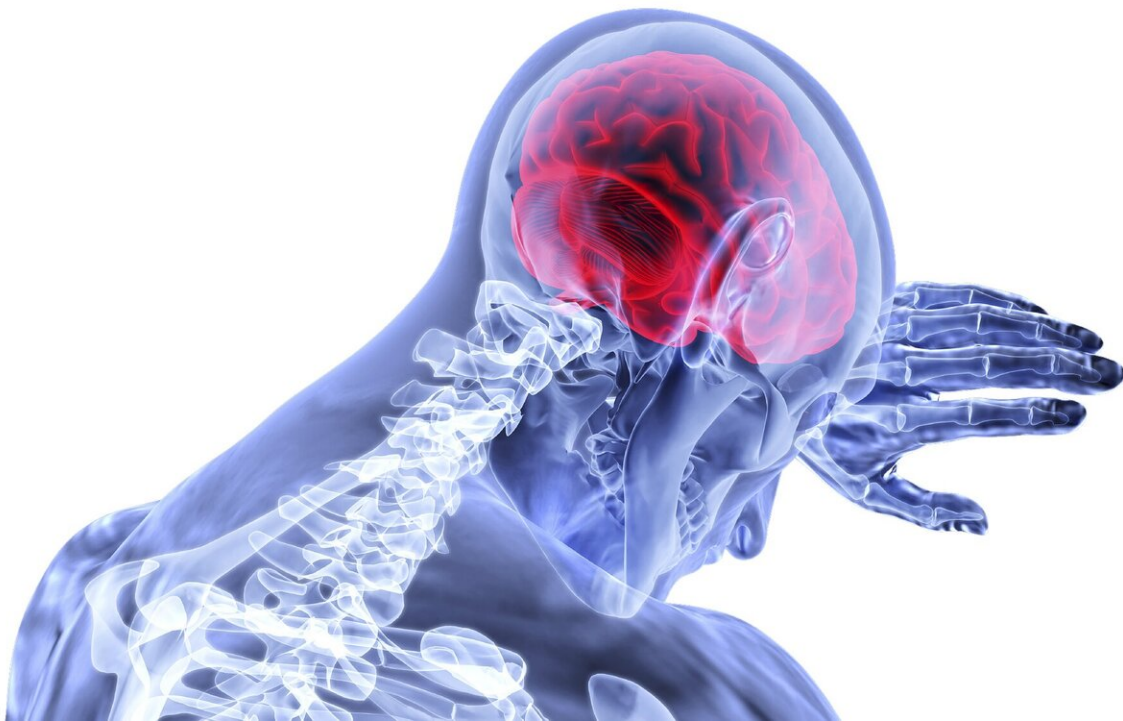


# One in three stroke survivors in the US faces food insecurity, according to new research

February 3 2022

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One in three stroke survivors in the U.S. have food insecurity, which is nearly double the prevalence among people who have not had a stroke, according to preliminary research to be presented at the American Stroke Association's International Stroke Conference 2022.

According to the American Heart Association, [food insecurity](#) means a person is struggling to get enough [food](#) or has to make tough choices between food and other basic needs. It is estimated that about 1 in 10 households in the U.S. experienced food [insecurity](#) in 2020. Although food insecurity is not a new problem, the COVID-19 pandemic increased awareness of the problem and its disproportionate impact on historically disenfranchised communities.

Social determinants of health, such as race, education, income, poverty, [social isolation](#) and zip code, have a substantial impact on health including heart health. How much money a person has, for example, can impact one's ability to buy enough food or [healthy food](#). The resulting food insecurity is a barrier to a [healthy diet](#), a cornerstone for [cardiovascular disease](#) and [stroke prevention](#).

"Ours is the first study to examine the prevalence of [stroke](#) survivors who may have [poor access](#) to food," said study author May A. Kim-Tenser, M.D., M.H.A., FAHA, an associate professor of neurology at the Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

To better understand the prevalence and predictors of food insecurity among stroke survivors, researchers evaluated health information from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) from 1999 to 2015. The 48,242 participants were categorized as having food insecurity based on answers to a U.S. Adult Food Security Survey Module, and prevalence, predictors and trends in food insecurity among adults 20 years of age or older, with and without a history of prior stroke.

The analysis found:

- From 1999 to 2015, 1,877 of the more than 48,200 people

studied self-reported a history of stroke.

- The proportion of stroke survivors with food insecurity increased from 6% in 1999 to 30% in 2015. Thus, 1 in 3 stroke survivors had food insecurity in 2015.
- In 2015, the prevalence of food insecurity among stroke survivors was nearly double that of individuals who reported no history of stroke.
- Several factors were associated with food insecurity among stroke survivors: younger age, Hispanic descent, lower education levels, unmarried status, and poverty.
- Hispanic individuals were twice as likely as non-Hispanic individuals to report food insecurity.
- Having an income level below, at or slightly above the federal poverty level (annual income of

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