

# Online program improves well-being of stroke survivors

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Access to an online program that provides easily accessible, interactive, tailored healthy lifestyle and behavior change techniques is associated with better health-related quality of life among adult stroke survivors, according to new research from the University of Newcastle and Flinders University.

Stroke can lead to serious consequences for those that survive in terms of physical and cognitive disability. Improving lifestyle and [health risk behaviors](#), including tobacco and alcohol use, [physical activity](#), diet, depression, and anxiety, has the potential to significantly enhance [stroke survivors'](#) quality of life.

Led by Dr. Ashleigh Guillaumier from the University of Newcastle and senior author Professor Billie Bonevski from Flinders University, the study, published in the journal *PLOS Medicine*, undertook a randomized control trial to evaluate the online program "Prevent 2nd Stroke" (P2S), which encourages users to set goals and monitor progress across various health risk areas.

399 adult stroke survivors with an average age of 66 were asked to complete a telephone survey, following which they were randomly assigned to receive either a list of generic health information websites or 12 weeks of access to the P2S online program. The group with P2S access also received additional text messages encouraging use of the program.

Nearly all participants then completed a six month follow-up survey, with the researchers finding those who received P2S access had a higher health-related quality of life (HRQOL) score than those who received the generic health information.

Compared to those in the [control group](#), significantly higher proportions of people in the group who received access to P2S also reported having no problems with [personal care](#) and an ability to participate in their usual daily activities.

The authors say that while most of the participants were generally "well" stroke survivors, with little to no disability, limiting the scope of the study, it still points to the benefits of the online program.

"Online platforms are a viable and impactful model to address the health information needs and behavior change challenges of stroke survivors," says Dr. Guillaumier.

"This paper is the culmination of 8 years of research, starting with a small grant from the National Stroke Foundation that funded the development of the online program which was co-developed with consumers and key stakeholders," added Professor Bonevski.

"The next step for Prevent Second Stroke is to scale up its implementation to ensure it reaches and benefits the highest number of people who have experienced a stroke, including those with greater stroke-related disability."

**More information:** Evaluation of an online intervention for improving stroke survivors' health-related quality of life: A randomised controlled trial, *PLoS Medicine* (2022). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pmed.1003966](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1003966)

Provided by Flinders University

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