

More must be done for depressed stroke survivors as incidence climbs, say researchers

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Researchers say that more must be done for depressed stroke survivors,

as new findings show 60% of stroke survivors would experience depression within 18 years, a much higher estimation than previous studies.

This compares to 22% of the general population experiencing depression in the same time frame.

The King's College London study, published today in *The Lancet Regional Health—Europe*, also found that 90% of cases of depression occurred within five years of surviving a stroke, indicating a key time for health care intervention.

The findings look at incidence of mild and severe depression in the South London Stroke Register, a cohort of 6,600 survivors of stroke in the Lambeth and North Southwark boroughs.

The population was 55.4% male with a [median age](#) of 68 years. 62.5% were from a white ethnic background and 29.7% from a Black ethnic background.

While post-stroke depression is common after stroke and associated with poor functional ability and increased mortality, the study found that [severe depression](#) tended to occur earlier after stroke, had a longer duration, and was quicker to recur than mild depression.

Professor Yanzhong Wang, Professor of Statistics in Population Health at King's College London, said, "Depression is common in stroke survivors but our research shows it persists for much longer than previously thought. We know that depression can limit a stroke survivor's mobility including simple things as walking and holding objects and can also increase the risk of death. With an aging population in the UK and an increase in the proportion of older adults, it's essential we plan for rising [health care](#) demands to tackle the anticipated surge in

stroke cases."

Corresponding author Lu Liu, a Ph.D. candidate with a clinical background at King's College London, said, "Quality of life is important for [stroke survivors](#) as there is evidence depressed survivors have a reduced survival rate. There are many reasons why this could be, including disruptions to the survivor's social life, reduced [physical ability](#) and inflammatory disorders observed in depressed patients.

"More clinical attention should be paid to patients with depression that is longer than one year because of the high risks of experiencing persistent depression."

More information: *The Lancet Regional Health – Europe* (2024).
[www.thelancet.com/journals/lan ... \(24\)00048-6/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lan... (24)00048-6/fulltext)

Provided by King's College London

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