

Stroke Death Rate Declining

(NAPSA)—Good news: Stroke has dropped from the nation's fourth-leading cause of death to No. 5, according to new federal statistics.

Doctors Report

The decline in stroke deaths may be due in part to improvements in treatment and prevention, explains Ralph Sacco, M.D., chairman of Neurology at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. "There are more stroke centers now operating in the U.S. and the acute care of stroke is improving."

"The fact that the death rate is declining from this terrible and devastating disease is gratifying news," says American Heart Association/American Stroke Association President Elliott Antman, M.D., professor of medicine and associate dean for Clinical/Translational Research at Harvard Medical School and a senior physician in the Cardiovascular Division of the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. "Still, far too many people are dying from stroke and too many people are suffering greatly from this disease."

Stroke remains a leading cause of disability in the U.S. "Stroke is more disabling than it is fatal," says Dr. Sacco. "Getting medical attention at the first sign of a stroke gives the patient the best chance for recovery."

What You Can Do

While the death rate declined, the number of Americans having strokes actually increased, which underscores the importance for all Americans to learn the sudden signs of stroke and what to do if a stroke is suspected. The American

F Face Drooping
A Arm Weakness
S Speech Difficulty
T Time to Call 9-1-1 TM

Think F.A.S.T.: Know the signs of a stroke and get help right away.

Stroke Association's Together to End Stroke initiative, which is nationally sponsored by Covidien, teaches the acronym F.A.S.T. to help recognize the most common signs of stroke.

F.A.S.T. stands for:

F—Face Drooping: Does one side of the face droop or is it numb? Ask the person to smile.

A—Arm Weakness: Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

S—Speech Difficulty: Is speech slurred, is the person unable to speak, or is he or she hard to understand?

T—Time to call 9-1-1: If you see any of these symptoms, even if they go away, call 9-1-1 and get the person to the hospital immediately.

Learn More

To download the American Stroke Association's free "Spot a Stroke F.A.S.T." mobile app and find nearby hospitals recognized for stroke care, visit www.StrokeAssociation.org.