WOMEN'S HEALTH

Study Shows Eating Fish Reduces Stroke Risk

(NAPS)—A recent study suggests that a diet high in fatty fish can significantly decrease a woman's risk of ischemic stroke. According to the study, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA), women who ate four ounces of fish two to four times a week cut their risk of ischemic stroke by 48 percent.

The fish most often cited as the highest in Omega 3 fatty acid concentrations include king oscar sardines, salmon and mackerel. These cold-water fish have a high percentage of Omega-3 fatty acids, which have been cited in leading health studies to lower blood pressure and increase cardiovascular health. Due to increasing evidence of the health benefits of fish oils, the American Heart Association recently issued a recommendation that people eat at least two servings of fish per week.

The JAMA article suggests that Omega-3 fatty acids work to alleviate blood clots, which are largely responsible for ischemic strokes. This type of stroke constitutes more than 80 percent of all strokes. Significantly, these properties did not increase the dangers of hemorrhagic strokes. According to author Kathryn M. Rexrode of Harvard-affiliated Brigham & Women's Hospital, "Our research suggests that women can reduce their risk of thrombotic stroke by up to 48 percent by eating fish two to four times per week."

SARDINES ARE PACKED with Omega-3 fatty acids which studies show lower blood pressure and increase heart health.

While the benefits exist for any level of fish consumption, the larger the intake of fish, the greater the stroke prevention. The study concluded that, even after adjusting for age, smoking and other risk factors, women who ate fish decreased their stroke risk by seven percent (for one serving per month) to an astounding 52 percent (for five servings or more per week).

Rexrode concluded, "We would recommend to women that they include more fish to their diets, as part of a healthy diet which may reduce the risk of a number of diseases, including stroke."

The Nurses Health Study, one of the nation's oldest and most important research efforts, examined roughly 14 years of data on 80,000 nurses between the ages of 34 and 59.