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Predictors for being physically active to keep fit and/or to lose weight after stroke: South London Stroke Register

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Introduction

Increased physical activity and weight loss (if appropriate) after stroke is recommended for secondary prevention in the National Clinical Guidelines for Stroke (2008). However, there is a lack information about the proportion and the characteristics of stroke patients currently undertaking physical activity to keep fit and/or lose weight.

Method

Data were collected from the South London Stroke Register (SLSR), a population based stroke register covering a multiethnic source population of 271,817 inhabitants (2001) in South London. Information on stroke patients' level of physical activity was collected 12 months post stroke. Logistic regression analysis was performed to identify independent predictors for increased physical activity to keep fit and/or lose weight post stroke, including age, sex, ethnicity, stroke severity (Barthel Index) and risk factors.

Results

Between Jan 2004 and December 2006, 358 first ever stroke patients were followed up 12 months post stroke. Mean age was 69, 45% were female: ethnicity was categorized as white (65%), black (25%) and other (10%). Overall, 45% of surviving stroke patients reported undertaking exercise, 25% and 1% reported exercising to keep fit and lose weight respectively, 19% reported exercising to keep fit and lose weight. In multivariate analysis, being physically active was associated with younger age ($p < 0.001$), less severe disability ($p < 0.001$) and black ethnicity ($p < 0.005$).

Conclusion

This study identified only one half of stroke survivors participate in physical activity at 12 months post stroke. Stroke survivors reported being physically active for different reasons but are less likely to do so to lose weight.