

Stress Strongly Correlated With Cryptogenic Ischaemic Stroke



A recent study published in *Neurology*[®] suggests that people living with chronic stress may face a higher risk of stroke. The research focused on younger adults and found a link between stress and strokes of unknown cause in women—but not in men. However, the study does not prove that stress directly causes strokes; it only proves that an association exists.

Younger adults often experience stress due to demanding jobs, long hours, financial struggles, and job insecurity. While previous research has shown that chronic stress negatively affects overall health, this study suggests it may also increase stroke risk in [younger women](#).

The study analysed 426 individuals between 18 and 49 who had suffered an ischaemic stroke with no known cause. Each was matched by age and sex with a control group of 426 people who had not had a stroke.

Participants completed a stress questionnaire evaluating their stress levels over the previous month. Those who had suffered strokes filled it out retrospectively, assessing their stress levels before the event. The questionnaire included 10 questions, such as, “In the last month, how often have you felt unable to control the important things in your life?” Responses were scored from zero to four, with four indicating the highest level of stress. A total score of 0–13 was classified as low stress, 14–26 as moderate, and 27–40 as high. On average, stroke patients scored 13, while those without strokes scored 10.

The findings revealed that people who had strokes were more likely to have experienced at least moderate stress. Among stroke patients, 46% reported moderate or high stress levels, compared to 33% of those without strokes.

Even after adjusting for factors like education, alcohol use, and blood pressure, researchers found that moderate stress in women was linked to a 78% higher risk of stroke, while high stress was linked to a 6% increase. However, no such connection was found in men.

More research is needed to understand why stress appears to increase stroke risk in women but not in men. There is also a need to explore why moderate stress had a stronger association with stroke risk than high stress. A deeper understanding of these links could help develop better prevention strategies.

Source: [American Academy of Neurology](#)

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