



Canadian Stroke Network

Réseau canadien contre
les accidents cérébrovasculaires



HEART &
STROKE
FOUNDATION
OF CANADA

FONDATION
DES MALADIES
DU CŒUR
DU CANADA



*Finding answers. For life.
À la conquête de solutions.*

BILLIONS OF DOLLARS, TENS OF THOUSANDS OF LIVES AT STAKE - Why aren't proven stroke solutions being used consistently in Canada?

June 14, 2006

OTTAWA _Widespread access to organized stroke care could prevent more than 160,000 strokes, prevent disability in 60,000 Canadians and save \$8 billion net in health-care costs over the next 20 years in Canada, according to an economic analysis released today by the Canadian Stroke Network (CSN) and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada (HSF).

Despite solid evidence, prevention measures, stroke treatments and health practices that could prevent death, reduce disability and save billions in health-care costs are not being routinely used in Canada. These include organized stroke care units, use of clot-busting therapies, better access to rehabilitation and building awareness of the signs and symptoms of stroke among the public and health workers.

"If we implement proven stroke therapies and practices across the country, the savings in lives and dollars will be significant," says Dr. Mike Sharma, a neurologist and spokesperson for the CSN and HSF. "Most proposals to improve health care result in substantial costs to provide benefits to people. With eight billion in net savings, our model demonstrates that the benefits of a comprehensive stroke program far outweigh the costs."

The economic analysis was developed by Dr. Sharma and the Caro Research Institute for the Canadian Stroke Strategy, a partnership between the Canadian Stroke Network and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada to revamp the health-care system by doing what research has proven to work in stroke prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. The Strategy will provide tools and support to provinces in areas like defining best practices, building awareness, and coordinated research, so that they can build provincial stroke strategies appropriate to their needs and resources. The ultimate goal is to ensure that all Canadians have access to organized stroke care by 2010.

National data released last week by the Canadian Institute for Health Information showed that we are not moving the needle when it comes to stroke survival. "We can clearly do much better in improving stroke outcomes," says Sally Brown, CEO of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada. "Prevention, specialized care and rehabilitation made a huge difference in improving survival and quality of life for cancer and heart disease patients, and we can do the same in stroke."

"The reality is that patients are not getting the care we know we could provide," says Dr. Antoine Hakim, CEO and Scientific Director of the CSN. "The evidence is so overwhelming. If we just did today what we know works, we can save lives and reduce disability from stroke."

...2/



Canadian Stroke Network

Réseau canadien contre
les accidents cérébrovasculaires



HEART &
STROKE
FOUNDATION
OF CANADA

FONDATION
DES MALADIES
DU CŒUR
DU CANADA



*Finding answers. For life.
À la conquête de solutions.*

The projections of savings from organized stroke care are based in part on the experience in Ontario, where a coordinated stroke system has been in place since 2000. The Ontario Stroke Strategy is already showing significant results, including:

- 65% of stroke patients released from hospital emergency department following a “mini-stroke” (TIA, or transient ischemic attack) are followed up in a provincially funded stroke prevention clinic (where available), compared to nine percent in 2000-01. This “secondary prevention” means that many more patients are less vulnerable to a full stroke.
- 32% of stroke patients are receiving clot-busting medications at specialized regional stroke centres, compared to a rate of 9.9% in 2000-01. Use of this medication within three hours after the onset of a stroke can greatly reduce the level of disability that the person may ultimately experience.
- 72% of Ontarians can cite at least two warning signs and symptoms of stroke, compared to 53% in 2003, thanks to public awareness campaigns led by the Heart and Stroke Foundation and funded by the Government of Ontario. Better recognition means faster access to treatment, and therefore better health outcomes.

Progress and momentum are also building in other provinces as they develop integrated stroke strategies.

The HSF and the CSN are working with governments, professional organizations and individuals across the country, through the Canadian Stroke Strategy, to ensure that every province can achieve better stroke care by implementing organized stroke care.

Data used for the economic analysis come from the Registry of the Canadian Stroke Network, the Canadian Heart Health Survey, Statistics Canada and the Institute for Clinical and Evaluative Sciences.

The results do not account completely for indirect costs such as the impact on caregivers, lost productivity and costs to families and communities. As well, they do not account for the substantial impact of stroke prevention measures on rates of related conditions like dementia, heart disease, diabetes and kidney disease.

Dr. Sharma’s work is motivated by his personal experience. “I’ve seen the incredible impact of better stroke care with my own eyes,” he says. “I’ll never forget the smile on the face of the first patient who got up and walked away after what would have been a devastating stroke - because they were seen early and got the right treatment. That image will never leave me.”

...3/



Canadian Stroke Network

Réseau canadien contre
les accidents cérébrovasculaires



HEART &
STROKE
FOUNDATION
OF CANADA

FONDATION
DES MALADIES
DU CŒUR
DU CANADA



*Finding answers. For life.
À la conquête de solutions.*

The Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Canadian Stroke Network urge health policymakers in Canada at all levels to act now to support efforts to improve stroke prevention, treatment and rehabilitation underway across the country.

-30-

The Heart and Stroke Foundation (www.heartandstroke.ca) is a leading funder of heart and stroke research in Canada. Our mission is to improve the health of Canadians by preventing and reducing disability and death from heart disease and stroke through research, health promotion and advocacy.

About the Canadian Stroke Network (www.canadianstrokenetwork.ca) The Canadian Stroke Network is made up of more than 100 of the country's best and brightest researchers from 24 universities across the country. The Network, which is headquartered at the University of Ottawa, includes partners from industry, the non-profit sector, provincial and federal governments. The Canadian Stroke Network is part of the federal government's flagship science and technology initiative called the Networks of Centres of Excellence, or NCE program. The Network is committed to reducing the physical, social and economic impact of stroke on the lives of individual Canadians and on society as a whole.

For more information on the economic analysis and the Canadian Stroke Strategy, contact

Jane- Diane Fraser
Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada
613-569-4361, ext 273
jfraser@hsf.ca

Cathy Campbell
Canadian Stroke Network
613-562-5696
cathy@canadianstrokenetwork.ca

For more information on the status of provincial stroke strategies, contact your local Heart and Stroke Foundation media representative -see "contact us" at www.heartandstroke.ca/media