



Canadian Stroke Network

Réseau canadien contre  
les accidents cérébrovasculaires

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***Major National Study finds there is significant work to be done to improve the quality of stroke care in Canada***  
*Canadians are not recognizing the symptoms of stroke*

**OTTAWA** – A major national Canadian study on the quality of stroke care released today by the Canadian Stroke Network (CSN), one of Canada’s Networks of Centres of Excellence, finds that there is significant work to be done to improve prevention, treatment and recovery from stroke.

The study’s key findings include:

- Two thirds of stroke patients admitted to hospital do not arrive in time to receive the best possible stroke care.
- Stroke patients need greater access to stroke units;
  - 77% of stroke patients do not receive treatment in a stroke unit.
- When patients arrive at hospital, they are not treated fast enough;
  - Only 40% of patients who arrived within 3.5 hours of symptom onset received a CT (computed tomography) or MRI (Magnetic resonance imaging) scan within an hour of arrival.
- Patients receive good care in hospital but several aspects of stroke care need to be significantly improved;
  - Only 12% of ischemic stroke patients admitted to a hospital with the capability to administer the important clot dissolving drug tPA were treated with the drug. Based on tPA rates at some of Canada’s top stroke centres, the target number could be triple the current rate for those ischemic strokes that arrive within the 3.5-hour window.
  - Only 22% of the hospitals studied were affiliated with a secondary stroke prevention clinic.
- Access to rehabilitation is vital.
  - Only 37% of moderate to severe strokes cases are discharged to a rehabilitation facility.

*“The Quality of Stroke Care in Canada could not be timelier,”* says Dr. Robert Côté, Chair of the study’s National Steering Committee and a Professor at McGill University. *“The results of this study should be used to prioritize investments in stroke care and improve and monitor the quality of stroke care for all Canadians. Stroke is one of the leading causes of death and the main cause of neurological disability in Canada. The study will be of great value to our health system.”*

“The study’s findings and recommendations are a ‘call to action’ to the Canadian stroke care community,” says Dr. Moira Kapral, a national steering committee member and Associate Professor, Faculty of Medicine and Department of Health, Policy Management and Evaluation at the University of Toronto. “There needs to be a greater emphasis on improving the public’s awareness about the early signs and symptoms of stroke and the importance of calling 9-1-1 and having an ambulance bring them to hospital immediately.”

The study looked at the quality of stroke care provided in emergency response, in-hospital care and in rehabilitation and recovery. Anonymous information from patients’ records was used and included: time of stroke symptom onset, timeliness of emergency medical system access, treatment received in the emergency department, acute inpatient care and information related to patient discharge from the acute care hospital.

“We are extremely pleased with the results of the study because it illustrates what can be achieved in stroke care in Canada. If Canada invests now in innovative and sustainable stroke care systems and programs—we will achieve real benefits such as saving more lives and reducing the impact of stroke,” says Dr. Antoine Hakim, CEO and Scientific Director of the Canadian Stroke Network.

The study included data from all health jurisdictions in Canada including government and health systems.

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To view the *The Quality of Stroke Care in Canada* and Backgrounder please go to:

- [Backgrounder](#)
- [Link to Study](#)

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**About the Canadian Stroke Network ([www.canadianstrokenetwork.ca](http://www.canadianstrokenetwork.ca))**

The Canadian Stroke Network includes more than 100 of Canada’s leading scientists and clinicians from 24 universities who work collaboratively on various aspects of stroke. The Network, which is headquartered at the University of Ottawa, also includes partners from industry, the non-profit sector, provincial and federal governments. The Canadian Stroke Network, one of Canada’s Networks of Centres of Excellence, is committed to reducing the physical, social and economic impact of stroke on the lives of individual Canadians and on society as a whole.