

Severely Depressed Young Patients Have Over 5-times Increased Risk for Stroke: A Five-Year Follow-up Study

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Abstract

Background

This study aims to estimate the risk of developing stroke within 5 years of discharge among young patients ages 18 to approximately 44 who were hospitalized for depressive disorders.

Methods

Our study design features a study cohort and a comparison cohort. The study cohort included patients ages 18 to approximately 44 who were hospitalized with a principal diagnosis of depressive disorder ($n = 827$), whereas the comparison cohort consisted of 4,135 patients selected randomly (five for every depressed patient) and matched with the study group in terms of gender, age, and date of discharge. Each patient was tracked for 5 years after their discharge in 1998. Cox proportional hazard regressions were performed to compute the 5-year stroke-free survival rates after adjusting for possible confounding factors.

Results

During the 5-year follow-up period, 50 depressed patients (6.05% of the study cohort) and 48 non-depressed subjects (1.16% of the comparison cohort) developed strokes. The adjusted hazard of stroke was 5.43 (95% confidence interval = 3.47–8.51, $p < .001$) times greater for depressed patients than for non-depressed subjects.

Conclusions

Our findings show young patients ages 18 to approximately 44 who were hospitalized for depressive disorders were at over five times greater risk of developing stroke within 5 years of discharge compared with non-depressed age- and gender-matched subjects.