



Purpose

The purpose of this critical review was to examine the research literature on the relationships of social support and coping strategies with health-related outcomes among stroke survivors and their family caregivers.



"It's all overwhelming."
"How will I manage?"
"How can I remember all this?"
"There are too many decisions."
"I feel all alone."
"Who can I trust to help me do the right things?"

"I lost control of my body and my life and I feel alone and powerless."



Background

Post-stroke disability often disrupts family roles and responsibilities. Role reversal, in combination with the disabilities, is emotionally taxing and physically fatiguing for both the stroke survivor and the family caregiver. Depression can result and when left undermanaged can lead to poor health outcomes.

• Research has shown social support is an important factor in recovery, post-stroke and caregiver depression.^{1,2} Studies have indicated high levels of social support are associated with faster functional recovery and more extensive recovery in stroke survivors.³

• Also, that social support is independently associated with the presence and severity of post stroke depression and that positive social interaction is a significant contributor to variance in initial post stroke depression.^{4,5}

METHODS

Databases including PubMed, iMedPub, Medline Plus and AHA Journals were searched for articles published between 1996 and 2016. Key key terms were used and articles and/or abstracts were assessed to identify articles included.

Identified	Screened	Eligible	Included
Articles identified via database searching	Articles assessed for inclusion criteria	Full-text articles or abstracts assessed for eligibility	Articles included
N=53		N=38	N=27

Key Words

Caregivers
Family caregivers
Depression
Stroke outcome
Stroke survivor stress
Community care
Stroke burden
Barriers
Interventions
Social support

Inclusion Criteria

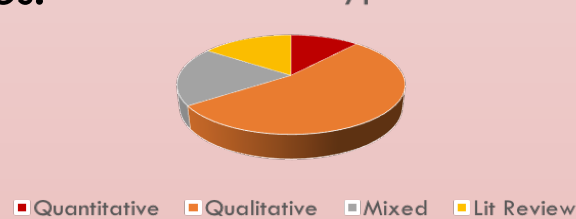
Addresses post-stroke survivor and/or caregiver:

- Impacts
- Coping
- Experiences
- Perceptions
- Needs
- Preparedness
- Support
- Interventions
- Community resources
- Community integration

FINDINGS

Twenty-seven articles identified by key terms related to stroke survivor and caregiver emotional and adjustment support needs, social support, depression and effective interventions, were included for review. The majority, 52%, were qualitative studies, 19% mixed (qualitative and quantitative) studies, 19% literature reviews and 10% quantitative studies.

Research Type



The articles were almost exclusively, 93%, found in peer-reviewed journals.

Journal Type



Results

Some specific findings include, but are not limited to, the following:

- There are significant differences across levels of social support⁶
 - High levels of support associated with faster and more extensive recovery
 - Having a small network size was independently associated with increased risk of incident stroke⁷
 - Family caregivers rank emotional disturbances as their number one stressor⁸
- Positive social interaction was a **significant** contributor to variance in initial post stroke depression⁹
- Social support **was independently associated** with the presence and severity of post stroke depression⁹
- Early discharge to community rehab led to worse state of general health among caregivers even with a problem-solving approach¹⁰
 - Model of care focused on patient and too little on goal-setting for the caregiver
- In-person interventions are not feasible for busy caregivers¹¹
- Delivery of interventions via phone and Web may be beneficial approaches¹¹

We found overwhelming evidence that attention to stroke survivor and caregiver social network can advance recovery and improve the health and well being of both stroke survivors and caregivers.

Knowledge gaps and focus on emotional and adjustment support needs are not being adequately met by community-based health services. This points to an important need for changes in practice to acclimate stroke survivors and their family caregivers to their new life roles, but also the need for more rigorous studies.

Conclusion

In addition to more research, there is a critical need for changes in facilitating transitions of care to meet the emotional and adjustment needs in the stroke population.

Emphasis on individual needs and providing information during transitions of care on managing stressors in the post-stroke journey is needed - especially information about community resources that offer opportunities to build and maintain social connections and enhance problem solving.

Current models of care focusing primarily on the stroke survivor, with little goal-setting for the caregiver, is a significant barrier to the overall health and well-being of both survivor and caregiver.

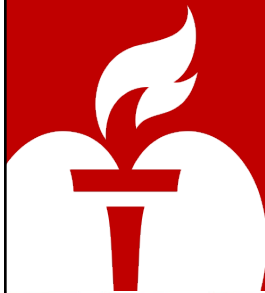
Encouraging health professionals to screen for social network presence and size and promoting support-seeking behavior may help advance recovery and improve the health and well being of stroke survivors and family caregivers.

References

- ¹T. Bakas, P. Clark, M. Kelly-Hayes, R. King, et al. *Stroke*, 2014; 45: 00-00
- ²T A Glass, D B Matcher, M Belyes and J R Feussner. *Stroke*, 1993; 24: 64-70
- ³R. King, C. Ainsworth, M. Ronen, R. Hartke; *J Neurosci Nurs*, 2010; 42 (6): 302-311
- ⁴R. Hartke, R. King; *Topics in Stroke Rehabilitation*, 2002; 9 (1): 16-33
- ⁵R Kammeyer, J K Daggy, L Williams. *Stroke*. 015; 46: A14
- ⁶T A Glass, D B Matcher, M Belyes and J R Feussner. *Stroke*, 1993; 24: 64-70
- ⁷M. Nagayoshi, S. Everson-Rose, H. Iso, et al. *Stroke*, 2014; 45: 2868-2873
- ⁸W. Haley, J. Allen, J. Grant, O. Clay, et al; *Stroke* 2009; 40: 2129-2133)
- ⁹R Kammeyer, J K Daggy, L Williams. *Stroke*. 2015; 46: A147
- ¹⁰A. Meily, C. Heugten, M. Post, et al. *Patient Ed and Counseling*, 2005; 56: 257-267
- ¹¹T. Bakas, P. Clark, M. Kelly-Hayes, et al, *Stroke*. E. 2014; 45:00-00



ADVANCING STROKE RECOVERY THROUGH SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT



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BACKGROUND

Post-stroke disability often disrupts family roles and responsibilities. Role reversal, in combination with the disabilities, is emotionally taxing and physically fatiguing for both the stroke survivor and the family caregiver. Depression can result and when left undermanaged can lead to poor health outcomes.

Research has shown social support is an important factor in recovery, post-stroke and caregiver depression.^{1,2} Studies have indicated high levels of social support are associated with faster functional recovery and more extensive recovery in stroke survivors.³

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PURPOSE

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"There are too many decisions."
"It is so hard right now."
"I feel all alone."
"Who can I trust to help me do the right things?"*

"Nothing has been the same since my stroke. It's like my whole world has been turned upside down. After 4 months I still have a lot of weakness on my left side. I'm in a foot brace and walk with a cane. I'm dealing with anger, anxiety, depression, comprehending, expressions and much more. I'm unable to return to work. I find it hard to motivate myself to wanting to do stuff. I'm wondering if things will get better....."



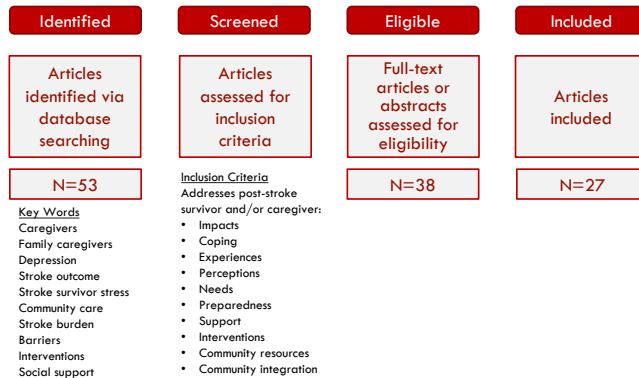
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Research Type



■ Quantitative ■ Qualitative ■ Mixed ■ Lit Review

Journal Type



■ Peer-Reviewed ■ Professional, Not Peer Reviewed



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