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STROKE ALLIANCE FOR EUROPE

The Link Between Stroke and Heart Disease

Stroke and heart disease have a lot in common. Abnormal heart rhythm can cause stroke, and they are linked by being among the top causes of death worldwide and by their long list of preventable causes.

They are both one of the leading causes of death worldwide

The world's biggest killer is heart disease, accounting for 16% of the world's total deaths, closely followed by stroke which is responsible for 11% of deaths. In addition to this, heart disease and stroke are a major cause of disability and rising health care costs.(1)

Research shows that the total cost (health care, social care, informal care and productivity losses) of stroke care was €60 billion in 2017. Future costs of stroke care in Europe could increase to €86 billion in 2040 if we fail to invest in stroke prevention, treatments and rehabilitation.(2)

They are both common in low- and middle-income countries

Where you live also seems to be linked to your risk of developing heart disease and stroke. Over the last ten years, we have seen a shift in the number of cases in low- and middle-income countries, where it has become a major health problem. The biggest increase in absolute deaths is from heart disease which has risen by more than one million to 3.1 million since 2000. (1)

They share the same list of risk factors

Heart disease and stroke have many common risk factors that can be modified by making some simple lifestyle changes: be active, keep a healthy weight, learn about cholesterol, don't smoke or use smokeless tobacco, eat a heart-healthy diet, keep blood pressure healthy, and learn about blood sugar and diabetes. (2) (3)

References

1. *https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/the-top-10-causes-of-death.*
2. *https://www.safestroke.eu/economic-impact-of-stroke/.*
3. *Salim S. Virani et al. Heart disease and stroke statistics 2021 update. A report from the American Heart Association. Originally published Jan 27*

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