Where You Live May Affect Your Post-Stroke Recovery

Stroke survivors in poor neighborhoods are more likely to experience worse recovery outcomes.

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New findings published in Neurology, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology, suggest that stroke survivors who live in socially disadvantaged neighborhoods have a worse recovery than residents of wealthier areas.

For the study, researchers assessed 776 stroke survivors in Nueces County, Texas and used U.S. Census data to determine the socioeconomic level of the neighborhood in which they lived. Three months after their stroke, participants answered questions about their ability to bathe, dress and cook; overall quality of life; and any symptoms of depression.

Results showed that people who lived in richer communities functioned well, were more independent and experienced better quality of life than those who lived in more impoverished locations.

“Reasons for this could include less access to public spaces in the neighborhood, more noise pollution, less access to support services and lower levels of perceived safety,” said Lynda D. Lisabeth, PhD, of the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, the author of the study.

In addition, individuals with the highest socioeconomic status were more likely to exhibit fewer symptoms of depression than people from the lowest socioeconomic level. What’s more, even after adjusting for age, additional health problems and ability to function prior to stroke, life in richer communities was still linked with fewer recovery issues among those with moderate to severe strokes.

Lisabeth concluded that more research must be done to zero in on the reasons for these associations and to determine strategies to improve the health outcomes and living conditions of stroke survivors in poorer neighborhoods.

For related coverage, read “Death Rates From Heart Failure Higher in Poorer Areas

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