

**Referenced from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada**

## **Backgrounder - Stroke**

A stroke is a sudden loss of brain function. It is caused by the interruption of the flow of blood to the brain (an ischemic stroke) or the rupture of blood vessels in the brain (a hemorrhagic stroke). The interruption of the blood flow or the rupture of blood vessels causes brain cells (neurons) in the affected area to die. The effects of a stroke depend upon where the brain was injured, as well as how much damage occurred.

The brain controls everything we say, do and think. A stroke can have a wide variety of effects including:

- Ability to move and coordinate movement
- Ability to feel touch, temperature, pain and movement
- Ability to see or to interpret what you see
- Ability to think, to remember, understand, plan, reason or problem-solve
- Ability to communicate (speaking and understanding speech, as well as reading, writing and the ability to do mathematics)
- Personality
- Emotions
- Behaviour

### **Stroke Statistics**

According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation:

- Stroke is the third leading cause of mortality in Canada
- Stroke accounts for 14,000 deaths every year.
- Over 50,000 diagnosed strokes occur in Canada each year – that's one stroke every 10 minutes.
- Stroke is also a leading cause of adult neurological disability and hospitalization.
- It has been estimated that there are more than 300,000 Canadians living with mild, moderate or severe disability due to stroke.

## **Prevalence**

- There are between 40,000 to 50,000 strokes in Canada each year.
- About 300,000 Canadians are living with the effects of stroke.
- In 2007/2008, York Central Hospital saw 385 patients with diagnosis of stroke through its Emergency Department. Of those 34 were treated with tPA.
- After age 55, the risk of stroke doubles every 10 years.
- A stroke survivor has a 20% chance of having another stroke within 2 years.

## **Effects**

- Of every 100 people who have a stroke
- 15 die (15%)
- 10 recover completely (10%)
- 25 recover with a minor impairment or disability (25%)
- 40 are left with a moderate to severe impairment (40%)
- 10 are so severely disabled they require long-term care (10%)

## **Costs**

- Stroke costs the Canadian economy \$2.7 billion a year.
- The average acute care costs is about \$27,500 per stroke
- Canadians spend a total of 3 million days in hospital because of stroke.

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