

One in three stroke survivors is dependent on professional help

[Functional status and use of healthcare facilities in long-term survivors of transient ischaemic attack or minor ischaemic stroke I van Wijk et al JNNP November 2006]

As the death rate from strokes continues to fall, the number of stroke survivors continues to rise. But the consequence of this is that many live with some level of disability and are therefore likely to need professional help. A Dutch survey of nearly 200 people at home up to 15 years after a minor stroke (TIA or transient ischaemic attack), indicates that around one in three relies on professional help.

Around a third needed help for one or more daily activities. Around one in five did not have a physically active lifestyle, and one in four was moderately or severely disabled. Moderate to severe disability was more likely if the person was elderly, had had a further stroke, and had other conditions at the same time.

The authors note that a TIA carries a higher than normal chance of a further stroke, so lifestyle and compliance with drug treatment are important to minimise that risk. One in 10 of those interviewed was not taking any drugs to ward off further strokes, such as aspirin or anticoagulants.