# STROKE IN YOUNG ADULTS

While strokes in the older population are declining, they are increasing in the younger population.

## Young Stroke Facts
- Young Adults Account for **10-15%** of All Strokes
- Young Adult Strokes Have More Diverse Causes:
  - Early MRI can improve diagnosis
  - Large-vessel atherosclerosis
  - Small-vessel disease
  - Cardiac embolism
  - Other determined etiology
  - Multiple etiologies
- Difficulties in Diagnosis:
  - Higher likelihood of a misdiagnosis
  - Clinical Clues:
    - Headache
    - Stereotyped transient ischemic attacks
    - Clinical setting
    - Systemic examination
    - Neurological examination
    - Eye examination
- Risks of Stroke in Young Adults:
  - Death from acute stroke
  - Death within 6 years
  - Recurrent stroke
  - Myocardial infarct
- Life-long Impact of Stroke:
  - Only 49% remained completely symptom-free
  - Only 42% resumed work
  - A majority of survivors reported emotional, social, or physical residuals that lessened the quality of life

## Young Stroke Concerns
- Young Stroke Patients May Feel:
  - Fatigue
  - Anxiety
  - Sensory overload
- Post Discharge Assessment Should Include:
  - Depression
  - Cognitive impairment
  - Caregiver strain
- Concerns of Survivors:
  - Career and finances
  - Family and relationships
  - Fatigue and sensory overload
  - Isolation and self-image
  - Physical and cognitive rehabilitation
- Model for Support Groups:
  - Identify participants
  - Meeting time
  - Marketing opportunities
  - Meeting structure
  - Topics and speakers
  - Communication
- Support Group Lessons Learned:
  - Expect to be flexible
  - Time and place needs to be clearly communicated
  - Young stroke survivors feel isolated
  - Some of the members may know more about stroke than you do
  - Be prepared to set time parameters
  - Identify common themes for future meetings

## Young Stroke Survivors
- The stroke belt or buckle has higher rates of stroke under the age of 55
- Young strokes have different causes that are not always preventable or lifestyle choices
- Distinct challenges in young stroke survivors
  - Raising a family
  - Higher education
  - Building a career
  - Financial planning

## Recommendations to improve young stroke care
- Standardization of young stroke definition
- Embrace global self-management models
- Maximize reclassification for research funds
- Encourage annual stroke assessment
- Promote respite care among caregivers
- Message beyond FAST:
  - Include symptoms like headaches and vision issues

To learn more about strokes in the young, visit YoungStroke (click for the link)