

Majority of Indians don't know the real cause of stroke: reveals research by Ipsos

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As a precursor to World Stroke Day 2013, the Indian Stroke Association (ISA) underlines the importance of creating awareness on the third largest killer in India - Stroke. As a part of this initiative, ISA commissioned a survey across India to understand the extent of knowledge that prevail about stroke against the Indian population. The research conducted by Ipsos, a leading market research agency, revealed that a majority of Indians do not know the real cause of stroke.

The survey was conducted across men and women aged between 25-50 years. A total of 1507 people were interviewed from Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Bangalore and Chennai. It mainly captured the respondents' awareness and understanding of the term 'Stroke', its symptoms, perceived causes, the prevailing knowledge about treatment options and their experiences with stroke sufferers.

Stroke is a medical emergency and can cause permanent neurological damage, complications, and death. Brain attack or stroke, is the rapidly developing loss of brain function due to disturbance in the blood supply to the brain. It is caused due to block in blood vessel (ischemic stroke) or rupture of the blood vessel (hemorrhagic stroke) in the brain. Ischemic stroke has to be properly treated with the only available treatment approved world over to prevent the brain damage within 4.5 hours. However the study revealed that the ordinary people are not aware of stroke, its manifestations, the immediate course of action in its occurrence and the rehabilitation treatment for patients.

Only half the people interviewed during the survey were aware that stroke affects the brain, may result in paralysis and needs treatment by a neurologist along with physiotherapy. The fact that stroke can occur without pain and often goes undiagnosed is not known to many. Even fewer are aware that specific clot reducing medication needs to be administered within 4 hours of the stroke and doing so can prevent disability.

According to a World Stroke Association survey in 2011, only 6.2% of people recognized stroke symptoms. Amongst those who were unaware of the symptom, majority of the respondents were young (below 35 years) which showcased that

awareness level were lower in the younger generation of India. According to survey Mumbai's understanding is slightly better as compared to the rest of the country.

"The survey clearly indicates that there is lack of awareness about the term stroke, its causes, preventive measures and immediate actions to be taken in case of a stroke occurrence. Today, there is a need to create greater awareness among the younger population who are the main observer of the acute event", said Dr Shirish Hastak, former president of the Indian Stroke Association (ISA), who has spearheaded multiple campaigns to create awareness on stroke.