

P6

THE IMPACTS OF POST-STROKE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPAIRMENTS ON LONG TERM WORK

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Background

Stroke is a major leading cause of mortality and morbidity worldwide (1), with over a third of first-episode strokes in England occurring in adults aged 40-69 years (2). Long-term complications vary, affecting both physical and mental health. Existing research has predominately focussed on the physical health consequences and related impact on work with fewer studies exploring the implications of mental health impairment post stroke on work participation.

Aims

To explore the psychological complications of ischemic stroke on work participation.

Methods

The population/concept/context (PCC) framework used to identify relevant search terms for this narrative review. Three databases (MEDLINE, Embase and APA PsycInfo) and reference lists (of included studies) were searched.

Results

927 papers were identified from database searching. Following initial screening, 22 studies were read in full and a further 18 studied identified through reference list searching. From this, five papers met the inclusion criteria.

Conclusion

Findings showed that many stroke survivors experience psychological impairments and struggle with work-related stress, fatigue and cognitive impairment at work which necessitates a requirement for adjusted working conditions, a less stressful work environment and increased support from employers. Consequently, lack of workplace support can adversely impact work participation and work functioning, leading to job changes or early retirement. Therefore, addressing these issues is crucial in maintaining long term work participation for post stroke survivors. Moreover, an improvement in patient and employer education on post-stroke impairments and recovery could also help to improve support in the workplace and ensure required adjustments are considered.

References

1. Feigin VL, Brainin M, Norrving B, Martins S, Sacco RL, Hacke W, et al. World Stroke Organization (WSO): Global Stroke Fact Sheet 2022. *Int J Stroke*. 2022;17(1):18-29.
2. England PH, Brine SM. New figures show larger proportion of strokes in the middle aged 2018 [Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-figures-show-larger-proportion-of-strokes-in-the-middle-aged>