Metabolic Syndrome Linked to Earlier Strokes

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Patients with both type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome have strokes an average of 3.5 years earlier than do those who have type 2 diabetes alone, according to a study.

There were no significant differences between diabetes patients with and without metabolic syndrome in the type of stroke, with lacunar stroke predominating in both groups, wrote Imtiaz M. Shah and colleagues from Ayr (Scotland) Hospital (Diabetes Res. Clin. Prac. 2008;79:e1-e4).

The retrospective study involved 151 patients with metabolic syndrome and type 2 diabetes, and a control group of 92 patients with diabetes alone. All patients had experienced a stroke between September 1996 and August 2004. Patients were considered to have metabolic syndrome if they had two or more of the following additional risk factors: obesity, low HDL cholesterol, elevated triglycerides, or hypertension.

Patients with metabolic syndrome experienced their stroke at an average of 71.7 years of age, compared with 75.2 years among the control group. Other than the defining characteristics of metabolic syndrome, the only other significant difference between the groups was in the proportion taking statins (40% among patients with metabolic syndrome and 24% among the control group).

Lacunar stroke, an indication of small-vessel disease, was responsible for 44% of strokes in both control patients and 44% of strokes in patients with metabolic syndrome. Transient ischemic attacks accounted for 39% of the strokes in control patients and 38% of the patients with metabolic syndrome; cortical strokes accounted for 15% and 13% of the strokes, respectively; and intracerebral hemorrhage accounted for 2% and 5% of the strokes.

The investigators stated that they had no conflicts of interest.