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Awareness about the risk factors and warning symptoms of stroke among Khartoum locality residents in December 2017-January 2018

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Background & Aim: Decreasing the incidence of stroke and reduction of the time between the onset of stroke warning symptoms and hospital admission require sound public knowledge about stroke. This community-based study aims at assessing public knowledge about the risk factors and warning symptoms of stroke, in addition to the attitude and practice in cases of acute stroke and the sources of information.

Methods: Community based interviews were conducted in December 2017 in three randomly chosen neighborhoods within Khartoum Locality. A total of 150 interviews were completed, and the houses were chosen using systematic random sampling. A combination of open and closed ended questions was used.

Results: Of the 150 respondents, only 61 (52%) were able to give a complete or partially correct definition of stroke. 75 (50%) could recall at least one risk factor for stroke, and the risk factor that was most frequently recalled was hypertension 52 (34.7%). Regarding the warning symptoms of stroke, only 61 (40.7%) were able to recall at least one symptom, with weakness/numbness being the most frequently recalled. As expected, responses were better in the aided/closed ended questions. The most frequently mentioned sources of information were general life experiences, a family member with a history of stroke, and mass media.

Conclusions: Poor knowledge about the risk factors and warning symptoms of stroke reported in the study group necessitate widespread educational campaigns to increase the public awareness about stroke, particularly among the high-risk groups.

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