Stroke Costs To Double by 2030, Groups Say

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The rising prevalence of stroke in an aging population is likely to more than double the cost of stroke care over the next two decades, the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association warned.

Annual stroke-related medical costs are projected to jump from $71.6 billion in 2012 to $183.1 billion in 2030, according to a statement from the organizations in the August issue of *Stroke*.

Total annual costs, including the price of lost productivity, were estimated to rise 129 percent to $240.67 billion by 2030, Bruce Ovbiagele, MD, MSc, of the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, and colleagues reported in the statement.

"The issue of the projected increasing toll of all cardiovascular disease including stroke should be firmly on the agenda of policy makers in all sectors and at all levels of health care ... directing them to begin earnest planning and decision making aimed at timely detection and optimal treatment of stroke risk factors," they wrote.

For physicians, that means taking what works in prevention and applying it more aggressively, said Ovbiagele, who also presented the findings at a briefing on President Obama's Brain Initiative [1]on Capitol Hill.

"The biggest bang for buck would be primary prevention," he told *MedPage Today* in an interview. "We know it works but we know we have a lot of room for improvement. We could do more."

Up to 80% of strokes are preventable through control of hypertension, high cholesterol, diabetes, and obesity, he noted.

The Affordable Care Act provisions may help by boosting access to such care as well as rehabilitation for those who do have a stroke, he added.

Stroke-related care already accounts for about 11% of the Medicare budget and about 2% of total national health expenditure, even when excluding nursing home care for survivors.

The primary drivers for the projected increase were rising stroke rates and increasing per capita medical spending, according to the statement.

Stroke prevalence is expected to rise 21% by 2030, touching 4% of the American population compared with 3% in 2012, a difference of 3.4 million individuals.

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