African American Men and Strokes

Anisha Sahadat

Shelly Pierre

Manoucheka Louis

Sabrina Fertil

Neldine Sicar

Chamberlain College of Nursing

NR222: Health and Wellness

November 2019

**African American Men and Strokes**

Stroke refers to the death of brain cells, which is caused by a lack of oxygen due to a blockage of blood flow to the brain (CDCP, 2016). It is one of the leading causes of deaths and more prevalent in African American men than any other ethnic group of men in the United States. The signs and symptoms of a stroke are sudden and when treated immediately can prevent any long-term disability and diminished quality of life. Recovery from a stroke is possible but prevention is better when the risk factors are controlled. In this regard, it is essential to acknowledge the preparedness off health promotion, prevention, and restoration among the culture of African American men and stroke.

**Culture of African American Men**

 African American men have higher risks of having a stroke than white men because of their culture. The statistics read that two in every five African American men have high blood pressure, which they acquire at a young age due to the high consumption of salt in their diet. Also, sickle cell anemia which is a genetic disorder is more popular in this culture (CDCP 2016). These cultural practices lead to an unhealthy diet and lifestyle that continues to increase the dangers of stroke.

**Lifestyle**

 African American men adopted the lifestyle of heavy smoking, high consumption of alcoholic drinks, saturated fatty foods and excess salt in their diet. In this regard, a man who has ever experienced stroke is at high risk of having another stroke. This lifestyle that they have adapted to puts them in line to acquire strokes. (Dobkin, 2015). Other factors such as lack of exercise and diabetes, when combined with high blood pressure, adds to being at risk for a stroke.

**Risk Factor of Diet**

African American men love to eat homemade fried chicken and mac and cheese which taste good but also can clog the arteries. According to Willett (2017), most African American men’s diet contains oil and fats that contribute to their stroke.  Eating excessive amounts of egg yolk and red meat can contribute to a high buildup of oils and fats in the body, resulting in heart disease and high blood pressure. Overeating raises cholesterol levels, thus increasing the risks of stroke (CDCP, 2016). On the other hand, overweight increases the chances of getting blood pressure, which may result in a stroke.

**High Blood Pressure**

 High blood pressure causes stress to arteries due to over-pumping, resulting in damaged blood vessels. Therefore, the damaged blood vessels lead to blood blockage, which can cause a stroke.  Unhealthy foods that contain enormously high contents of cholesterol and excess salt may lead to high blood pressure and diabetes (Romero et al., 2014). Stress together with high blood pressure is the recipe for strokes.

**Diabetes**

 African American men eat rich in carbohydrates, leading to excess sugar in their bodies. The sugars (glucose) enters the bloodstream (Romero et al., 2014). In this regard, excess glucose forms a deposit of fat in the bloodstream, resulting in blood clots; therefore, causing a stroke.

**DNA**

 Genetics increases the risks of stroke in African American men due to passing the disease from one generation to another through genes also known as the heredity process. This process together with sickle cell anemia increases the risk factor of stroke.

 **Health Promotion/Prevention**

**Health promotion deals with the awareness of the risk factors of stroke. When African Americans and other cultures educate themselves about stroke it can reduce the death rate associated and more people will be able to live longer healthier lives. S**troke education teaches people about how to reduce these risk factors (Romero et al., 2014). Education is one of the key components that can keep a person from getting a stroke and enjoying life.

**Eat Healthily**

 This health promotion strategy is important in preventing stroke since it enables people to understand healthy foods. Health promotions should emphasize a balanced diet and food with fewer oils and fats (CDCP, 2016). A healthy diet should include fruits and vegetables, lean proteins and less salt to avoid high cholesterol and hardening of the arteries.

**Regular Exercise**

 Exercise activates the body and contributes to successful blood flow in the body. Therefore, exercise reduces the risks of high blood pressure that could have resulted in a stroke (Romero et al., 2014). Exercise also contributes to staying fit and weight loss. It keeps the functions of the body working thus the avoidance of heart diseases and diabetes. It also helps in the maintenance of blood pressure down and stress.

**Less Alcohol Consumption**

Alcohol is high in salt and is filtered by the liver which in excess is not good for the body. However, excessive alcohol consumption increases fibrinogen levels in the body, which is a blood clotting factor, that leads to the clotting of blood in vessels (Romero et al., 2014). Therefore, Africa-American men should consume less alcohol to reduce the hazard of getting too many blood clots. On the flip side, aspirin is dangerous since it increases the possibility of

bleeding too much, despite preventing a clot-related stroke. Therefore, people should avoid taking aspiring drugs to avoid getting a stroke.

**Health Restoration Therapy**

Physical therapy is important in restoring health for a stroke survivor since it helps the patient relearn simple motor activities (Dobkin, 2015). Speech therapy is an effective rehabilitation strategy that enables a stroke patient to relearn speaking skills, languages, and other forms of communication. Mental health therapy helps a stroke patient who experiences emotional and behavioral changes (Dobkin, 2015). It helps the patient control emotions and behavior such as irritability, carelessness, confusion, anxiety, anger, and forgetfulness.

**Health People 2020**

 Health People 2010 is a prevention agenda for the federal government that aims at building a healthier nation (Dobkin, 2015). The agenda is meant to formulate national health objectives and identify effective prevention measures for health problems. In this regard, the agenda is relevant to the topic of study since it emphasizes a healthy lifestyle, health behaviors, improved healthcare, and other intervention plans than may help reduce stroke in African American men.

**Conclusion**

 When African American men educate themselves about the risk factors associated with strokes and adopt a healthy diet, lifestyle, exercise regularly and consume fewer alcoholic beverages, they will better equip themselves for prolonged healthy life. Healthcare can continue the intervention for stroke survivors, as for those who have not yet had a stroke should take heed in changing their lifestyle and eating habits to promote living, healthier lives and prevent the illness of a stroke. Early diagnosis is the best treatment intervention.

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP). (2016). A closer look at African American men and high blood pressure control: A review of psychosocial factors and systems-level interventions. *Atlanta: US Department of Health and Human Services*. <https://www.cdc.gov/stroke/docs/AA_Men_Stroke_Factsheet.pdf>

Dobkin, B. H. (2015). Rehabilitation after stroke. *New England Journal of Medicine*, *352*(16), 1677-1684. <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/rehabilitation-after-stroke>

Romero, J. R., Preis, S. R., Beiser, A., DeCarli, C., Viswanathan, A., Martinez-Ramirez, S., ... & Seshadri, S. (2014). Risk factors, stroke prevention treatments, and prevalence of cerebral microbleeds in the Framingham Heart Study. *Stroke*, *45*(5), 1492-1494. [https://www.stroke.org/-/media/stroke-files/lets-talk-about-risk-factors-for-stroke- ucm\_309713.pdf](https://www.stroke.org/-/media/stroke-files/lets-talk-about-risk-factors-for-stroke-%09ucm_309713.pdf)

Willett, W. (2017). *Eat, drink, and be healthy: the Harvard Medical School guide to healthy eating*. Simon and Schuster. [https://www.health.harvard.edu/womens-health/8-things- you-can-do-to-prevent-a-stroke](https://www.health.harvard.edu/womens-health/8-things-%09you-can-do-to-prevent-a-stroke)