

The American Heart Association - American Stroke Association and Medtronic Collaborate to Reduce Recurrent Strokes

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A Leading Cause of Disability and Death, Many Strokes Have No Known Cause

DUBLIN and NASHVILLE, TENN. - Feb. 13, 2015 - The American Heart Association/American Stroke Association (AHA/ASA) and Medtronic plc (NYSE: MDT), today announced a collaboration to reduce the rate of recurrent strokes in the U.S. The two organizations will work together over several years to educate, raise awareness and support effective management of patients who have strokes, one of the most devastating diseases affecting Americans today. The initiative, announced at the American Stroke Association's annual International Stroke Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, will focus on reducing strokes of unknown cause, called "cryptogenic stroke."

Every year, approximately 795,000 Americans have a strokeⁱ, the fifth leading cause of death and a primary cause of disability. The most common (87 percent) type of stroke, called "ischemic," occurs when blood vessels carrying oxygen and nutrients to the brain are blocked by a clot causing brain cells to die. Thirty percent of ischemic strokes have no known cause (deemed cryptogenic) even when diagnostic tests are performed during a stroke patient's hospitalization.

Recent studies have shown that many stroke patients have a common heart condition called atrial fibrillation (or AF), when the heart beats irregularly or rapidly. Patients with AF are five times more likely to have strokes,ⁱⁱ but their condition often goes undiagnosed because their AF episodes occur only sporadically and may not have any symptoms. Studies have shown that continuous, long-term cardiac monitoring of cryptogenic stroke patients helps physicians detect and diagnose AF and provide treatment to prevent a recurrent stroke.ⁱⁱⁱ

"Recent evidence suggests that up to 20 percent of patients who do not have a cause for their stroke identified while in the hospital may demonstrate evidence of intermittent or paroxysmal atrial fibrillation during weeks to months of extended heart rhythm monitoring," said Lee Schwamm, MD., American Stroke Association volunteer spokesperson, vice chairman, department of neurology, and director of stroke services at Massachusetts General Hospital. "As the cost and convenience of outpatient cardiac rhythm recorders has improved, they will likely play an increasingly important role in identifying or excluding atrial fibrillation or other arrhythmias in patients with ischemic stroke. Further research is needed to discern which types of patients benefit most from extended monitoring, and which types and what duration of atrial rhythm abnormalities increase the risk of future stroke."

"This collaboration between AHA and Medtronic will help to address these critically important topics. As physicians, patients and families become more aware of AF as a potential cause of stroke, and as research confirms the risks associated with these more subtle disturbances, we believe that this could become a game changer in the stroke field in helping us to reduce recurrent strokes, ultimately reducing disability and saving lives," he said.

The new collaboration will support the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's goal to reduce death from stroke by 20 percent by 2020.

"Our stroke prevention collaboration with the AHA was founded on a common goal of improving care for the hundreds of thousands of unexplained stroke patients across the country," said Nina Goodheart, vice president and general manager of the diagnostics and monitoring business at Medtronic. "Insertable cardiac monitors have been proven to be highly effective for the detection of atrial fibrillation in these patients and when that occurs, clinicians are able to change patients' treatment course, which can help reduce their risk of suffering a subsequent stroke. Together with AHA, we are committed to conducting more research and education to ensure that clinicians have the appropriate resources to better serve these

patients."

For more information about stroke visit StrokeAssociation.org.

About the American Stroke Association

The American Stroke Association is devoted to saving people from stroke - the No. 2 cause of death in the world and a leading cause of serious disability. We team with millions of volunteers to fund innovative research, fight for stronger public health policies, and provide lifesaving tools and information to prevent and treat stroke. The Dallas-based association was created in 1997 as a division of the American Heart Association. To learn more or to get involved, call 1-888-4STROKE or visit strokeassociation.org. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

About Medtronic

Medtronic plc (www.medtronic.com), headquartered in Dublin, Ireland, is the global leader in medical technology - alleviating pain, restoring health and extending life for millions of people around the world.

Any forward-looking statements are subject to risks and uncertainties such as those described in Medtronic's periodic reports on file with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Actual results may differ materially from anticipated results.

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i American Heart Association/American Stroke Association: <http://www.strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG/>

ii Wolf PA, et al. *Stroke*. 1991; 22: 983-988.

iii N Engl J Med 2014; 370:2478-2486 June 26, 2014 DOI: 10.1056/NEJMoa1313600

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