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Johnson, Elizabeth A.

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Committee Members:	Austin, Joan Kessner
	Perkins, Susan M.
	Pressler, Susan J.
	Williams, Linda S.
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Abstract:

Stroke is the leading cause of adult disability with over 5 million American adults experiencing physical, psychological, and/or social limitations related to stroke. Although depressive symptoms and poor quality of life (QOL) are key outcomes for stroke survivors, little is understood about how these outcomes are affected by stroke survivors' evaluation of their experience. The concept of cognitive appraisal, an evaluation of the meaning of a situation for one's well-being, may explain some of the factors associated with post-stroke depressive symptoms and QOL. The purpose of this study was to determine factors associated with post-stroke depressive symptoms and QOL using a conceptual model derived from the transactional theory of stress originally proposed by Lazarus and Folkman. Three aims guided this study: to determine whether (a) depressive symptoms at 4 months after stroke are predictive of stroke-specific QOL at 10 months; (b) perceived social support, self-esteem, and optimism at 1 month after stroke predict depressive symptoms among stroke survivors at 4 months; and (c) threat appraisal at 1 month after stroke is a mediating variable between perceived social

support, self-esteem, and optimism at 1 month after stroke and depressive symptoms at 4 months. A secondary analysis of data from 392 stroke survivors in the Randomized Trial of Treatment for Post-stroke Depression (AIM study) was conducted. Using a descriptive correlational design and multiple regression analyses, longitudinal associations among perceived social support, self-esteem, optimism, threat appraisal, depressive symptoms and stroke-specific QOL were examined. Perceived social support, self-esteem, and optimism were significantly associated with threat appraisal. Threat appraisal was significantly associated with post-stroke depressive symptoms. Stroke-specific QOL was found to be stable between 4 and 10 months. Partial mediation of the relationship between the explanatory variables and depressive symptoms by threat appraisal at one month post-stroke was demonstrated. In conclusion, threat appraisal is an important factor to consider in future research and intervention development in relation to post-stroke depressive symptoms.

Description:

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