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Parental Divorce in Childhood Linked to Stroke in Adulthood

Children who experience a parental divorce are over twice as likely to suffer a stroke at some point in their lives, according to new research presented in New Orleans at The Gerontological Society of America's (GSA) 63rd Annual Scientific Meeting.

This finding is based on a representative community sample of over 13,000 people from the 2005 Canadian Community Health Survey. The data analysis was conducted by Esme Fuller-Thomson, PhD, and a team of colleagues at the University of Toronto.

"We were very surprised that the association between parental divorce and stroke remained so strong, even after we had adjusted for smoking, obesity, exercise and alcohol consumption," said Fuller-Thomson.

Of the 13,134 total study respondents, 10.4 percent had experienced parental divorce during their childhood, and 1.9 percent reported that they had been diagnosed with a stroke at some point in their lives. When adjusting for age, race and gender, the odds of stroke were approximately 2.2 times higher for those who had experienced parental divorce.

When other risk factors -- including socioeconomic status,

health behaviors, mental health, and other adverse childhood experiences -- were controlled in a logistic regression analysis, the odds ratio of stroke for those who had experienced parental divorce remained significantly elevated.

GSA's meeting -- the country's largest interdisciplinary conference in the field of aging -- is taking place at the Hilton, New Orleans Riverside from November 19 to 23. An estimated 3,500 professionals are expected to attend and the program schedule contains more than 500 scientific sessions featuring research presented for the first time.

Fuller-Thomson's presentation was titled, "Is There a Link Between Parental Divorce During Childhood and Stroke in Adulthood? Findings from a Population Based Survey.?"

Editor's Note: This article is not intended to provide medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.