

Aspirin Lowers Stroke Risk in Women, but Not Men: Presented at AHA

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DALLAS, TX -- November 22, 2005 -- Aspirin can reduce significantly the risk of ischemic stroke in women, although it appeared to have no such protective effect in men, according to findings from a meta-analysis.

David L. Brown, MD, Chief, Division of Cardiovascular Medicine, State University of New York, Stony Brook, New York, United States, presented the findings here on November 15th at the American Heart Association Scientific Sessions 2005 (AHA).

Dr. Brown and colleagues conducted a gender-specific meta-analysis of randomized trials of aspirin for the primary prevention of stroke. They looked at data from six clinical trials with a total of 44,14 men and 51,342 women who did not have coronary artery disease and had been randomly assigned to receive low-dose aspirin or placebo.

Among the women, aspirin use was associated with a 17% reduction in stroke risk ($P = .02$) and a 24% reduction in the risk of ischemic stroke ($P < .01$). For the men, aspirin use was associated with a nonsignificant increase of 13% in stroke risk ($P = .14$), with no effect on the risk of ischemic stroke.

Dr. Brown noted that there was no significant increase in the risk of hemorrhagic stroke among the women taking aspirin ($P = .89$), while men on aspirin faced a significant 69% increase in risk of hemorrhagic stroke ($P = .03$).

Co-investigator Jeffrey Berger, MD, Cardiology Fellow, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, United States, said the findings suggest that there are biological differences between men and women that contribute to these differences in stroke risk with aspirin use.

However, he said the results of the meta-analysis need to be confirmed in randomized, controlled trials before any gender-based recommendations regarding aspirin can be made.

[Presentation title: The Impact of Aspirin Therapy on the Occurrence of Ischemic and Hemorrhagic Strokes Among Men and Women: A Gender-Specific Meta-Analysis. Abstract 3771]

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