

## UCSD To Highlight Stroke Innovations For Stroke Month

April 19, 2004

Jeffrey Itrich

Stroke victims and their families know all too well how debilitating a stroke can be -- not just for the stroke victim but how devastating it can be on the whole family. To bring awareness to strokes, May has been designated as American Stroke Month and UCSD's Stroke and Cardiovascular Centers is holding a special forum, **Innovations in Stroke Treatment and Technology** on May 3 at Garren Auditorium on the UCSD Campus to bring attention to prevention, the latest research, diagnosis and treatment such as brain-cooling and telemedicine. The forum will feature UCSD Stroke Center physicians, Christy M. Jackson, M.D., Patrick D. Lyden, M.D., and Brett C. Meyer, M.D. Each physician will speak on the latest life-saving innovations in their area of expertise: prevention (Jackson), diagnosis and treatment (Meyer), and research (Lyden). For more information or to reserve a seat for this free lecture, call (619) 543-3499.

### A few important facts about stroke:

Someone in America suffers a stroke every 45 seconds, and every 3 minutes, someone dies from it. But thanks to professionals like UCSD's Stroke Center team, about 4.7 million stroke survivors are alive today.

Stroke is the third leading cause of death--behind diseases of the heart and cancer. Stroke is the leading cause of disability in the United States. Approximately 700,000 Americans will have a stroke this year--more than 163,000 will die.

When a stroke occurs, blood flow can't reach the region that controls a particular body function and that part of the body won't function properly.

Strokes can cause paralysis, memory loss, behavior changes, and problems with vision, speech and language.

Most strokes are ischemic, caused by a blood clot that blocks blood flow to part of the brain. But about 12% are hemorrhagic strokes--a ruptured blood vessel bleeds into brain tissue. Both types injure and can kill vital brain cells. Of these 9 percent are intracerebral hemorrhage and 3 percent are subarachnoid hemorrhage from an aneurysm.

50-70 percent of stroke survivors regain functional independence, but 15-30 percent are permanently disabled. Stroke is the leading cause of severe, long-term disability.

According to the Framingham Heart study, for people over age 55, the incidence of stroke more than doubles in each successive decade. However, stroke can happen to anyone, at any age. In fact, 28 percent of people who suffer a stroke annually are under age 65.

Until very recently, a stroke was seen as a lightning bolt from the blue: unpredictable, unpreventable, untreatable, and absolutely devastating. But in the past 7 years, there's been a revolution. A drug, the clot-busting tissue plasminogen activator (tPA) may, if given in the first 3 hours after an ischemic stroke begins, save a stroke victim's life, and limit disabling brain-cell damage. This would not be the course of treatment for hemorrhagic strokes.

In 2004, Americans will pay just over \$53 billion for stroke-related medical costs, most being nursing home care.

The signs of stroke: sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body, sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding, sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes, sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination, sudden, severe headache with no known cause.

Media Contact: Jeffree Itrich (619) 543-6427