

# Are Stroke Patients Skipping Rehab?



WEDNESDAY, Jan. 24, 2018 – Rehabilitation plays a crucial role in stroke recovery, but many patients could be missing out on it, a small study suggests.

For the study, researchers contacted 369 North Carolina stroke patients who were referred to rehabilitation either when they left the hospital or at a follow-up visit within 14 days.

Of 115 patients referred to home rehab services, 43.5 percent received it within 30 days. Of 85 patients referred to outpatient rehab, only 34 percent received it, the investigators found.

Non-white patients were 78 percent less likely than white patients to receive outpatient rehabilitation, after adjusting for factors such as age, severity of stroke and degree of disability, the findings showed.

The researchers found no demographic differences between patients who did and did not receive home-based rehabilitation, according to the study. It is scheduled for presentation Wednesday at the American Stroke Association's International Stroke Conference in Los Angeles.

Study author Dr. Cheryl Bushnell said the researchers could only offer a guess about what's going on.

“We don't know the exact reasons why these patients did not

receive rehabilitation, but we assume it has to do with the co-pay that is associated with outpatient therapy services, even for those who have insurance,” Bushnell said in a news release from the stroke association.

“Home health, on the other hand, does not include co-pays, but there were still over half of those referred who did not receive it,” she noted.

Bushnell is a professor of neurology and director of the Wake Forest Baptist Stroke Center in Winston-Salem, N.C.

“Clearly we need more research to understand these factors,” she added.

Research presented at medical meetings should be considered preliminary until it has been published in a peer-reviewed journal.

### **More information**

The U.S. National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke has more on stroke rehabilitation.



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Posted: January 2018