Does Socioeconomic Position Affect Awareness of the Warning Signs and Knowledge of Risk Factors of Stroke in Europe? A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

Background: Stroke is a significant global health problem. People of a lower socioeconomic position (SEP) are particularly at risk of having a stroke.

Aims: This systematic review aims to discover whether there is a difference in the knowledge of stroke risk factors and awareness of stroke warning signs with regards to SEP in Europe.

Methods: MEDLINE, Web of Science, Embase, PsycINFO and CINAHL were searched for articles looking at knowledge of risk factors and/or awareness of warning signs of stroke, with results broken down by SEP. A title and abstract screen, and, if appropriate, a full text screen, of these results was carried out, as well screening reference lists of included studies. Only studies in the English language and those based in Europe were included.

Results: The database search identified 2,090 records for screening. A further 28 papers from reference lists of the final included studies were also screened. Twenty articles were included in the final review. Eleven out of seventeen studies looking at stroke risk factors found increasing knowledge to be associated with higher SEP, four studies found there to be no difference by SEP and one study found increasing knowledge of risk factors to be associated with a lower SEP. With regards to stroke warning signs, fifteen out of nineteen studies found there to be a better awareness of warning signs with a higher SEP, three found there to be no difference, and one study found there was a higher knowledge of warning signs by lower SEP.

Conclusion: Overall, in Europe a better knowledge of stroke risk factors and awareness of warning signs is associated with a higher socioeconomic position. Public health campaigns and educational programmes aiming to increase stroke awareness should be targeted at people with a lower SEP.



Biography

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