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Prior Employment Status and Obesity Do Not Predict Post Stroke Fatigue

Introduction: Post-stroke fatigue (PSF) is a common emotionally, cognitive, and physically debilitating condition following a stroke. The prevalence of PSF is between 38 – 74% of patients who have a stroke. There is a lack of understanding of the risk factors or predictors of PSF, including prior employment status and obesity.

Methods: One hundred and twenty-one patients with a confirmed diagnosis of ischemic stroke in the past three years were enrolled into the study. Exclusion criteria included: severe aphasia and end stage concomitant diseases. PSF was assessed using the Fatigue Assessment Scale (FAS) (FAS: no fatigue ≤ 21, fatigue 22–50). Patients were then identified based on their employment status (previously worked) or obesity (BMI) and compared to the presence of PSF. Logistic regression analysis was used to predict dichotomized FAS score.

Results: Of the 52 patients who were obese, 21 experienced PSF (40%), while 31 did not experience PSF (60%). Of the patients who were not obese (69), 27 experienced PSF (39%), while 42 did not experience PSF (61%). A Fisher's exact test was applied to determine the association between PSF and obesity (p=1.000). A Fisher's exact test was applied to show the association between PSF and employment status (p=0.384). 92 patients had previously worked (76%) and 29 had never worked (24%). Of the 92 patients who previously worked, 39 experienced PSF (42%), while 53 did not experience PSF (58%). Of the patients who never worked (29), 9 experienced PSF (31%), while 20 did not experience PSF (69%). In logistic regression, employment status did not independently predict dichotomized FAS (adjusted odds ratio 1.34, 95% confidence interval [0.51, 3.50], p=0.557).

Conclusions: Previous employment status and obesity did not independently predict PSF in an urban, minority cohort.