

May: National Stroke Prevention Month ^[1]

Submitted on 16 May 2006 - 2:05pm

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Cited from [endi.com](#) ^[2] and [the National Stroke Association](#) ^[3] The Endovascular Center of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean, is awaiting the Legislature to approve a law project that would allow the Center to receive funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). " ' Now we are acquiring equipment, but we hope, in few months, to be able to begin a comprehensive brain stroke program', said Dr. Rafael Rodriguez Mercado, the only endovascular surgeon in the country, during the announcement of the Brain Stroke Prevention Month." " ' As there is not much known about cerebrovascular diseases in Hispanics, the Center can become an important place for this type of research', the director of the Medical Sciences Campus, Jose Carlo, said." A brain stroke happens when a blood clot blocks an artery (ischemic stroke) or a blood vessel is broken (hemorrhagic stroke), interrupting blood flow to an area of the brain. When any of these things happen, neurons start dying and cerebral damage happens, commonly affecting speech, movement, memory and behavior. "Existing information suggests that 85% of the 8.000 stroke cases registered annually are of ischemic origin", according to the physician. "On the other hand, Dr. Fernando Santiago Castillo, the only vascular neurologist of the Center, commented that, under the available medical treatment, a patient that presents/displays an arterial blockade has a three-hour window to get to the hospital, so that the treatment is effective." These reasons make it extremely important that the population knows the common symptoms of a brain stroke. These include "severe headache, paralysis or numbness of a side of the body and difficulty to speak and to see through one or both eyes. Some of the risk factors for stroke are: hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, high cholesterol levels, sedentary life, smoking, obesity and alcohol abuse." "Santiago Castillo emphasized that at the moment the Medical Sciences Campus works in several research projects, one of them which provides the alternative of an advanced therapy that would increase the patients' time-window of arriving to the hospital and receiving medical treatment to 6-8 hours after the appearance of symptoms." 80% of brain stroke cases are preventable, hence the importance of being informed. "These events usually are tragic"; 2/3 of the stroke survivors suffer of some level of incapacity.

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