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Abstract

BACKGROUND: Cerebrovascular diseases are a common cause of mortality, morbidity, and hospitalization among older adults. However, the long-term national trends in cerebrovascular disease-related hospitalizations in this age group are not well known.

METHODS: We used the National Center for Health Statistics trend data from the National Hospital Discharge Surveys (1970-2000) to determine incidence of cerebrovascular disease-related hospitalizations among persons 65 years and older in the United States. Only patients discharged with a primary discharge diagnosis of cerebrovascular disease were included. We estimated rates of hospitalization per 1000 civilian residents 65 years and older, for all patients and stratified by age, sex, and race.

RESULTS: Among persons 65 years of age and older, the total number of cerebrovascular disease-related hospitalizations increased from 372,000 in 1970 to 711,000 in 2000. However, the rates of hospitalization due to cerebrovascular disease remained unchanged at 20.7/1000 in 1970 and 20.4/1000 in 2000. The rates for persons 75-84 years and >85 years were, respectively, 2 and 3 times higher than that for persons 65-74 years throughout the study period. Rates for men and women were comparable and stable during the study period. Rates for African Americans, in contrast, increased from 14/1000 in 1970 to 20.6/1000 in 2000, peaking in 1985 (27.4/1000).

CONCLUSIONS: The overall rates of
hospitalization due to cerebrovascular disease remained high yet stable. However, the absolute number of hospitalizations due to cerebrovascular disease increased considerably, with potential for serious social, financial, and public health implications for the coming decades.

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