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## Depression limits life after stroke

Depression is striking one-in-three stroke survivors, rendering life for some near impossible.

[Research has revealed](#) mood was frequently affected following stroke, with depression the most common mood disturbance, limiting survivors ability to recover and their quality of life.

On World Health Day Stroke Foundation Chief Executive Officer Sharon McGowan echoed the World Health Organization's message of 'Depression: let's talk'.

"In the days, weeks and months after stroke attention can be so focused on a survivor's physical recovery – getting them walking or using affected limbs – that their overall wellbeing is ignored," Ms McGowan said.

"A person's mental and emotional health can significantly alter the outcomes from rehabilitation after stroke and ultimately the quality of the life experienced by survivors and their families, their social connectedness and ability to return to work."

The Stroke Foundation's bi-annual audit of Australia's rehabilitation services shows that the mental and emotional health of stroke survivors was often neglected within the health system.

[2016 Rehabilitation Audit](#) results show almost half of stroke patients were not provided with a mood assessment. In addition, of those assessed, two out of three patients who had been identified as having mood disorders – such as depression or anxiety – were not provided with a further psychological assessment or the necessary care.

Ms McGowan said stroke survivors often don't understand what they are feeling or why, making it vital for health professionals, survivors and their families to discuss mental and emotional health as part of stroke treatment and recovery.

"Mental and emotional health assessment, treatment and information must be included as part of routine patient care," she said.

"Too many patients are not getting an assessment for these common complications, and patients who have been identified as needing support or treatment are not being provided with the necessary care – it is not good enough."

This World Health Day the Stroke Foundation is calling for greater focus on the psychological needs of stroke survivors. This includes calling on the Federal and State Government to invest in resources to ensure all patients are assessed and appropriate support is provided during inpatient rehabilitation.

"This year, Australians will experience more than 55,000 strokes, one in three of these strokes will happen to someone of working age," Ms McGowan said.

"Medical advancements mean that stroke is treatable, however recovery from stroke can be a difficult experience, full of uncertainty and sometimes isolation. It is a journey of both courage and hope.

"Stroke can be beaten, we must support stroke survivors to live their best life possible after stroke."

[Vimeo footage of stroke survivors discussing psychological and emotional impact of stroke](#)

[Vimeo footage of stroke survivors discussing the need for psychological support](#)

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