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TRENDS AND ETHNIC DISPARITIES IN THE INCIDENCE AND OUTCOME OF STROKE IN AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND OVER 20 YEARS.

Kristie Norah Carter, MSc (hons)

ABSTRACT

Aims: The aims of this thesis were to investigate trends and ethnic disparities in the incidence and outcome of stroke in Auckland, New Zealand between 1981 and 2003.

Methods: Trends were assessed using information from the three Auckland Regional Community Stroke (ARCOS) studies, conducted in people (aged ≥15 years) in Auckland, during 12-month calendar periods in 1981-1982, 1991-1992, and 2001-2002. These studies used comparable definitions and case finding methods and have been shown to meet the stringent criteria for a population-based “ideal” stroke incidence study. Rates were calculated using Poisson distribution and are presented with 95% confidence intervals. Trends in survival were assessed using Cox Proportional hazards regression modelling.

Results: Overall trends in the incidence and event rates of stroke declined across the study period. These declines were significant in males and for the ages 65 to 74 years only. However, growing disparities in the rates of stroke between the major ethnic groups in New Zealand were found, with significant declines in New Zealand Europeans and increases in Māori and Pacific populations.

Dramatic improvements in survival over the study period were also found, with the greatest improvement in the acute period, within the first 28-days after stroke. Adjustments for patient or disease severity factors strengthened the survival model. However, adjustments for care/service factors nullified the survival model, thus explaining most of the improving trend.

Conclusions: The small declines in the incidence of stroke, improvements in survival and the ageing of the New Zealand population will lead to data dramatic increases in the number of people living with the effects of stroke. To maintain stable numbers of strokes occurring, more intensive prevention strategies need to target high-risk populations and population-wide health education strategies are needed to improve the health of the general population, hence reducing the risk of stroke.
To my parents

Phil and Judy Carter,

for their continued support and encouragement.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the many people who were involved with this thesis. Firstly, I would like to thank Professor Craig Anderson for encouraging me to embark upon this thesis. Thank you for your support over the years, both in Auckland and Sydney. I would also like to thank Professor Anthony Rodgers and Dr Velandai Srikanth for their advice and encouragement. I would like to acknowledge the team at www.betteredit.com who proof read the first four chapters of this PhD thesis.

To all of the people, patients, families and project staff, involved in the three ARCOS studies, a big thank you. Without all of the continued hard work over the past two decades this thesis along with its important messages would be lost. There have been a number of people who have provided statistical and epidemiological advice to me over the years: Professor Chris Wild, Dr Derrick Bennett, Dr John Huakau, Varsha Parag, Stephen Vander Hoorn and Julie Winstanley. Thanks a bunch to Dr Maree Hackett who was always there to bounce ideas off and walk down the PhD path with me.

I would like to say particular thanks to the Health Research Council (HRC) of New Zealand for their financial support during my PhD, providing me with a Pacific Health PhD scholarship. The HRC also provided funds for the conduct and completion of the three ARCOS studies. I would also like to thank the other funding bodies that have provided financial assistance with the research and writing of this thesis and for assistance with travel to conferences to present this work: The Clinical Trials Research Unit, The George Institute for International Health, The University of Auckland graduate research fund, and the Sir John Logan Campbell Medical Trust.

Finally, a big thank you to all of my family and friends who have kept me sane over the past four years. You have no idea how much I am indebted to you.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION .............................................................................................................. 1

2. STROKE AND ITS EFFECTS .......................................................................................... 8

2.1. What is a Stroke? ........................................................................................................ 8

2.2. Risk Factors for Stroke ............................................................................................. 10

2.2.1. Non-Modifiable Risk Factors ............................................................................. 10

2.2.2. Modifiable Risk Factors ...................................................................................... 13

2.3. Primary Prevention of Stroke .................................................................................. 17

2.4. Rates of Stroke .......................................................................................................... 20

2.4.1. Mortality ............................................................................................................... 20

2.4.2. Incidence .............................................................................................................. 21

2.5. Outcome from Stroke ............................................................................................... 22

2.5.1. Survival ................................................................................................................. 22

2.5.2. Disability ............................................................................................................... 23

2.5.3. Caregiver Burden ............................................................................................... 23

2.6. Treatment and Secondary Prevention of Stroke ....................................................... 24

2.6.1. Acute treatment ..................................................................................................... 25

2.6.1.1. Treatment for Acute Ischaemic Stroke ......................................................... 25

2.6.1.2. Treatment for Acute Haemorrhagic Stroke ............................................... 26

2.6.1.3. Stroke Units .................................................................................................... 27

2.6.1.4. Rehabilitation ................................................................................................. 28

2.6.2. Secondary Prevention ......................................................................................... 28

2.7. The Cost of Stroke .................................................................................................... 29

2.8. Summary .................................................................................................................... 29

3. TEMPORAL TRENDS IN STROKE .......................................................................... 31

3.1. Stroke Surveillance .................................................................................................... 32

3.1.1. Mortality Studies ................................................................................................. 33

3.1.2. Hospital- and Population-Based Studies .......................................................... 35

3.1.3. The “Ideal” Stroke Incidence Study ................................................................... 39

3.1.4. Summary .............................................................................................................. 48

3.2. Trends in Stroke Mortality ....................................................................................... 48

3.2.1. Ethnic Disparities in Trends in Stroke Mortality .............................................. 50

3.2.2. Summary .............................................................................................................. 51

3.3. Trends in Stroke Incidence ....................................................................................... 52

3.3.1. Trends in Cohort Studies .................................................................................... 53

3.3.2. Trends in Hospital-Based Studies ...................................................................... 53

3.3.3. Trends in Stroke in MONICA ............................................................................ 54

3.3.4. Ethnic Disparities in Trends in Stroke Incidence ............................................. 54

3.3.5. Trends in Ideal Stroke Incidence Studies .......................................................... 55

3.3.5.1. Methods ......................................................................................................... 55

3.3.5.2. Results ............................................................................................................ 68

3.3.5.3. Limitations of review ................................................................................……. 76

3.3.5.4. Summary ....................................................................................................... 77
5.1.1. MONICA Criteria .................................................................134
5.1.2. Capture Recapture ...............................................................138
5.2. Trends in Patient Characteristics .............................................142
  5.2.1. Trends in Acute Management .............................................144
5.3. Trends in Attack Rates ..............................................................147
5.4. Discussion ..................................................................................153

6. TRENDS IN ETHNIC DISPARITIES IN RATES .........................158
  6.1. Trends in Baseline Characteristics ...........................................158
  6.2. Trends in Attack Rates .............................................................162
    6.3.1. Pathological types of stroke .............................................175
    6.3.2. Ischaemic stroke subtypes ..............................................178
    6.3.3. Comparison to Other Population-Based Studies ................180
  6.4. Discussion ................................................................................184

7. TRENDS IN OUTCOME AFTER STROKE ..................................191
  7.1. Trends in Mortality .................................................................191
  7.2. Trends in Case Fatality ............................................................194
  7.3. Trends in Survival .................................................................197
    7.3.1. Demographics ...............................................................197
    7.3.2. Survival Modeling ..........................................................198
    7.3.3. Changes in Survival .......................................................202
  7.4. Discussion ................................................................................204

8. THE FUTURE BURDEN OF STROKE ......................................211
  8.1. First-Ever Prevalence ...............................................................211
    8.1.1. Disability .......................................................................214
  8.2. New Zealand Population Projections ......................................218
  8.3. Projections of Stroke Deaths ..................................................222
  8.4. Projections of First-Ever Stroke Cases ....................................226
  8.5. Projections of First-Ever Prevalent Cases ..............................232
  8.6. Discussion ................................................................................235

9. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS .....................................242
  9.1. Summary of Results ...............................................................242
  9.2. Study Strengths and Limitations .............................................243
  9.3. Implications for Future Research ............................................244
  9.4. Implications for Policy and Practice .......................................245

10. REFERENCES ..........................................................................248

11. APPENDICES ...........................................................................278
LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1  The gold standard criteria for an "ideal" stroke incidence study........42
Table 3.2  Summary table of methods used for case ascertainment, analysis and data presentation, and the strengths and limitations for population-based ideal stroke incidence studies.................................................................59
Table 3.3  Summary table of overall percentage change in incidence and annual percentage change in incidence and case fatality for ideal studies...........................................................................................................72
Table 4.1  Ethnic share of the Auckland population aged 15 years or older, from the 1981, 1991 and 2001 census.................................................................95
Table 4.2  Sources of notification for the three ARCOS studies.........................98
Table 4.3  Example of capture-recapture for two sources of notification........112
Table 4.4  Weights used in direct age standardization of rates, taken from the WHO World population (2003).410 .................................................................118
Table 5.1  Case ascertainment and assessment procedures for each study...133
Table 5.2  Measures of data quality using the WHO MONICA quality criteria for each study........................................................................................................135
Table 5.3  Contingency table of the four sources of notification used in capture-recapture analysis.................................................................139
Table 5.4  Capture-recapture log-linear modelling, estimating the number missing in each study.................................................................141
Table 5.5  Patient demographics, socioeconomic status and medical history of stroke patients in the three ARCOS studies........................................143
Table 5.6  Trends in acute management of stroke patients in the three ARCOS studies.................................................................146
Table 5.7  Age-, sex- and overall crude stroke incidence and event rates per 100,000 population in Auckland, New Zealand, 1981-2003.................149
Table 5.8  Age- and sex-specific annual stroke rates (per 100,000 age-standardised to the WHO world population) in Auckland, New Zealand, 1981-2003.................................................................151
Table 6.1  Patient demographics, medical history and management by ethnic group, across the three studies.................................................................160
Table 6.2  Age-specific crude first-ever (incident) stroke rates by ethnicity (per 100,000 population) in Auckland, New Zealand, 1981-2003.................164
Table 6.3  Annual stroke attack rates (per 100,000) by ethnicity, indirect standardised to the Auckland 2001 population, adjusting for age, sex and ethnicity, in Auckland, New Zealand, 1981-2003. .................167
Table 6.4  Annual stroke attack rates (per 100,000) by ethnicity, direct age-standardised to the WHO world population, in Auckland, New Zealand, 1981-2003.................................................................170
Table 6.5  The ratio of direct age-standardised rates (to the WHO World population) of ethnic minority groups compared to NZ/European, by study period.................................................................172
Table 6.6  Frequency of first-ever pathological stroke type and ischaemic stroke subtype, overall and by ethnic group, for the 2002-2003 ARCOS study......................................................................................................174

Table 6.7  Stroke incidence rates (per 100,000) by pathological stroke type, overall and by ethnic group, in Auckland, New Zealand in 2002-2003..176

Table 6.8  Incidence rates for ischaemic stroke subtypes by ethnic group (per 100,000), in Auckland, New Zealand 2002-2003. .................................179

Table 7.1  Annual stroke mortality rates, 1 year after first-ever stroke (per 100,000), direct age-standardised to the WHO world population, in Auckland, New Zealand, 1981-2003. ....................................................193

Table 7.2  28 day and 1 year case fatality after first-ever stroke, Auckland, New Zealand, 1981-2003......................................................................195

Table 7.3  Patient factors (demographics and medical history), stroke severity factors, and management and care of (first-ever) stroke patients in three ARCOS studies, using aggregated imputed data.........................199

Table 7.4  Univariate and multivariate Cox proportional hazards (PH) regression analysis of possible determinants of survival, with study forced into the model, using imputed data.................................201

Table 7.5  Hazard Ratios for change in 28 day and 1 year survival between studies, using imputed data, adjusting for patient, disease and care factors, sequentially. ..................................................203

Table 8.1  Crude and age-standardised (to the WHO world population) first-ever stroke prevalence rates (per 100,000) in Auckland, using data from the ARCOS 2002-2003 study........................................................213

Table 8.2  The proportion of first-ever stroke patients alive at six months, recovered, dependent or living in institutional care at the six month follow up, from the ARCOS 2002-2003 study..........................215

Table 8.3  Changes in dependency and living in institutional care before stroke and at the six month follow up, for first-ever stroke patients from the ARCOS 2002-2003 study................................................217

Table 8.4  The New Zealand census population (1981, 1991, 2001) and the estimated population projections in the New Zealand population aged 15 years and older (Series 5), from Statistics New Zealand. 401 ..................................219

Table 8.5  The combination of different scenarios used in the projection of stroke mortality, incidence and prevalence from 2001 to 2051 in New Zealand. ................................................................................................221

Table 8.6  The projected number of stroke deaths from 2001 to 2051, using different scenario’s of demographic and epidemiological change in mortality rates.........................................................223

Table 8.7  Projected number of new stroke cases, using different scenarios of demographic and epidemiological changes in the incidence of stroke..227

Table 8.8  Projected number of first-ever prevalent stroke cases, using different scenarios of demographic and epidemiological change. ......233
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1 Forrest plot of annual percentage change in incidence of stroke, from ideal stroke incidence studies. ........................................................75

Figure 3.2 Forrest plot of the annual percentage change of 28 day case fatality, in ideal stroke incidence studies. .............................................................................80

Figure 4.1 Map of the study population, the greater Auckland region...........93

Figure 4.2 Age structure of the Auckland population from the 1981, 1991 and 2001 censuses. ........................................................................................................95

Figure 4.3 Diagram of the flow of prevalent cases in and out of the population (adapted from Beaglehole et al, 1993). .................................................................127

Figure 5.1 Trends in one year stroke mortality in the three ARCOS studies compared with trends in New Zealand. .................................................................137

Figure 5.2 Plots of crude incidence and event rates by age and sex across the three studies (top), and age specific rates by study (bottom). .................148

Figure 5.3 Sex-, age- and sequence-specific stroke attack rate ratios (2002-2003 compared with 1981-1982). *Rates were age-standardised to the WHO world population and shown with 95% confidence intervals (CI). 152

Figure 6.1 Ethnic-specific stroke incidence and attack rates, and event ratios (SER). *Rates were age-, sex- and ethnicity- indirect standardised to the 2001 Auckland population and shown with 95% CI. .........................168

Figure 6.2 Trends in ethnic-specific stroke event rates, by period of ARCOS study. Rates were direct age-standardised to the WHO World population and shown with 95% CI. .......................................................171

Figure 6.3 Rate ratios (RR) of age-standardised incidence rates of pathological stroke types (top) and ischaemic stroke subtypes (bottom) by ethnicity in Auckland, New Zealand 2002-2003........................................177

Figure 6.4 Ethnic disparities in age-standardised incidence rates of stroke, per 100,000 (standardised to the WHO world population) in four population-based stroke incidence studies.............................................................181

Figure 6.5 Ratio of age-standardised stroke incidence rates in ethnic minority groups (Black, Māori, Other, Hispanic, Pacific) compared to the majority white/European population, in four population-based stroke incidence studies..........................................................183

Figure 7.1 Unadjusted Kaplan Meier curves of survival up to one year post stroke, for the three ARCOS studies. .................................................................196

Figure 8.1 Projections of new stroke deaths (adjusted for age and sex) in New Zealand, up to 2051. ..................................................................................224

Figure 8.2 Projections of first-ever stroke cases (adjusted for age and sex) in New Zealand, up to 2051. ..................................................................................228

Figure 8.3 Ethnic specific projections of incident stroke cases (adjusted for age) in New Zealand, up to 2021. .................................................................231

Figure 8.4 Projections of first-ever prevalent stroke cases (adjusting for age and sex), in New Zealand, up to 2051.........................................................234
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACE Inhibitor  Angiotensin Converting Enzyme Inhibitor
AF   Atrial Fibrillation
AIC  Akaikes Information Criterion
ANOVA  Analysis of Variance
ARCOS  Auckland Regional Community Stroke studies
BMI  Body Mass Index
C  Community Case Ascertainment
CF  Case Fatality
CHD  Coronary Heart Disease
CI  Confidence Interval
CT  Computed Tomography
CTRU  Clinical Trials Research Unit
CVA  Cerebrovascular Disease
D  Death Certificate Case Ascertainment
DALY  Disability Adjusted Life Years
DRG  Diagnostic Related Grouping
FDA  Federal Drug Administration
FSP  Framingham Stroke Profile
GCNKS  Greater Cincinnati Northern Kentucky Stroke study
GCS  Glasgow Coma Score
GP  General Practitioner
H  Hospital Case Ascertainment
HR  Hazard Ratio
ICD  International Classification of Diseases
ICH  Intracerebral Haemorrhage
IPA  Independent Practitioners Associations
IQR  Inter-quartile Range
ISC  Ischaemic Stroke
ISEI  International Socioeconomic Index
LR  Likelihood Ratio
MONICA  Monitoring of Trends and Determinants in Cardiovascular Disease
MRA  Magnetic Resonance Angiography
MRI  Magnetic Resonance Imaging
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Number of strokes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHANES</td>
<td>National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIHSS</td>
<td>National Institute of Health Stroke Scale</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOMAS</td>
<td>Northern Manhattan Stroke study</td>
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<tr>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
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<tr>
<td>NZ/European</td>
<td>New Zealand European</td>
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<tr>
<td>NZHIS</td>
<td>New Zealand Health Information System</td>
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<tr>
<td>NZSCO</td>
<td>New Zealand Occupational status</td>
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<tr>
<td>NZSEI</td>
<td>New Zealand Socioeconomic Index</td>
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<td>OCSP</td>
<td>Oxford Community Stroke Project</td>
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<td>OR</td>
<td>Odds Ratio</td>
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<td>OXVASC</td>
<td>Oxford Vascular Study</td>
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<tr>
<td>PH</td>
<td>Proportional Hazards</td>
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<tr>
<td>PICH</td>
<td>Primary Intracerebral Haemorrhage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rFVIIa</td>
<td>recombinant activated factor VIIa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RR</td>
<td>Rate Ratio</td>
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<tr>
<td>rtPA</td>
<td>recombinant tissue plasminogen activator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAH</td>
<td>Subarachnoid Haemorrhage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>SER</td>
<td>Standardised Event Ratio</td>
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<td>SES</td>
<td>Socioeconomic Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Stroke Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLSR</td>
<td>South London Stroke Register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>Standardised Mortality Ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIA</td>
<td>Transient Ischaemic Attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOAST</td>
<td>Trial of Org 10172 in Acute Stroke Treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UND</td>
<td>Undetermined Stroke Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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STATEMENT OF PARTICIPATION

The research presented in this thesis was based in part on data obtained from the third Auckland Regional Community Stroke (ARCOS) study conducted in Auckland between 2002 and 2003 by investigators of the University of Auckland. Professor Craig Anderson, formerly the co-director of the Clinical Trials Research Unit (CTRU) was the primary investigator of this study and the main supervisor of this PhD. Associate Professor Anthony Rodgers was maintained as the University of Auckland based supervisor after Professor Anderson moved to The George Institute for International Health in Sydney. Professor Ruth Bonita was responsible for the development, conduct and data from the two previous ARCOS studies conducted in 1981-1982 and 1991-1992.

Initially, I was brought into the study team to advise on statistical methodology and provide projections of potential sample size calculations. I was part of the Operations Committee that met weekly for the study, the Steering Committee that met monthly and the Qualitative and socio-economic analysis group that met bi-monthly to develop and conduct qualitative interviews of stroke victims and their informal caregivers of four ethnic groups. At these meetings I would provide updates of the notification and registration of cases to the study. I was involved in developing the Manual of Procedures for the study and the development of face to face and telephone questionnaires. It was through this process that Professor Anderson and I developed the proposal for this PhD.

As part of this study I was responsible for all statistical analyses and the supervision of a junior statistician who checked the results. I was also responsible for liaising with the New Zealand Health Information Service to sort through the notifications of all hospital discharges for stroke, match the names with the current ARCOS database and provide the study manager, Faith Mahoney, with a list of names of patients to be followed up in each hospital in the Auckland region. I worked closely with the data management and information technology teams at the CTRU to develop and validate the
data base with which the data would be entered by the data entry team of the
data management team and the permanent Oracle 8i database. All data was
then extracted into SAS 8.1 from the Oracle database.

As part of this thesis I spent a considerable amount of time sorting through a
mass of SAS datasets from the previous studies conducted in 1981-1982 and
1991-1992. All of these data were reviewed and organised and copied into a
permanent Oracle 8i database with the help of the data management and
information technology teams at the CTRU. The data was organised into
datasets by forms and follow up studies. As part of the continuation of the
follow up of all of the survivors, respectively. Ethical approval for this study
was provided by the Auckland Ethics committee. Through this study I
supervised third year medical student, who contacted all those cases who
were not known to have died from these studies and completed a short
telephone questionnaire about their current residence and health status and
their health related quality of life using the Short Form 36 questionnaire
(SF36).
PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

To date the following publications have resulted from this PhD thesis:


To date the following presentations have resulted from this PhD thesis:


