

Willi Daniels, 50+ year old professional, Germany

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50+ year old, stroke survivor

Date of stroke: December 1997

My story:

While blowing up a balloon in the night of New Year's Eve 1997 my first stroke occurred.

I thought: "OK, something must have happened in my brain". As I lost total ability to speak, I could not inform my family or someone else about my condition. Neither my family nor I imagined that I was having a stroke.

The emergency service was informed but could not assign the symptoms properly (short unconsciousness, loss of speech, disability to stand erect) as well. The doctor told us that everything would be just all right very soon.

When there was no sign of recovery after half an hour, the emergency service was called again. This time, it was recommended to go straight to the hospital. No ambulance was sent. So I was carried to an accident and emergency department of a nearby hospital by private car. The opening and admission to this department was refused in the beginning, because I was not transported in a horizontal position. It was not until heavy controversies of hospital staff and my accompanying people that I was finally admitted.

At last I laid in the emergency department and waited for the doctor to come. During the brief examination that followed I had the impression that the doctor had a preconceived idea of my status (for it was the night of New Year's Eve). He offered me a bed to have a good's night rest and I got an infusion to recover much faster.

I needed almost three days (without being able to speak) to explain the staff that something was wrong with my brain and that they should apply a CT.

The next day (the day my discharge was originally planned) I was informed that I had a left-hemisphere stroke and I had to stay in the hospital. I objected, shaking my head.

I am sure, if I had paid attention to stroke before and as a healthy man it would have saved myself and of course my family a lot of trouble and worries. With the knowledge about risk factors and symptoms of stroke, it is much easier for bystanders and stroke victims to inform the emergency medical service in a more detailed and qualified way, in order to get a quick and efficient therapy.

Unfortunately, despite of great efforts of some institutions and organisations, low knowledge about stroke is still prevalent in the population.

From my point of view, a better education and knowledge about stroke is very important, not just for the old, but also for the youth as well.