

Background

- Dementia and cognitive problems are common following stroke.¹
- Identifying who is at risk of dementia could have clinical implications for follow-up after stroke.
- Informing someone who has just had a stroke that they are at risk of dementia may cause anxiety.

Main aim

- This UK-wide quantitative survey aimed to explore healthcare professionals' views on discussing risk of post-stroke dementia at the time of stroke.

Methods

Design: Quantitative, cross-sectional electronic survey (N=60).

Piloting: Five healthcare professionals provided feedback on the clarity of the questions and the layout of the survey.

Participants: All UK healthcare professionals who care for patients with stroke.

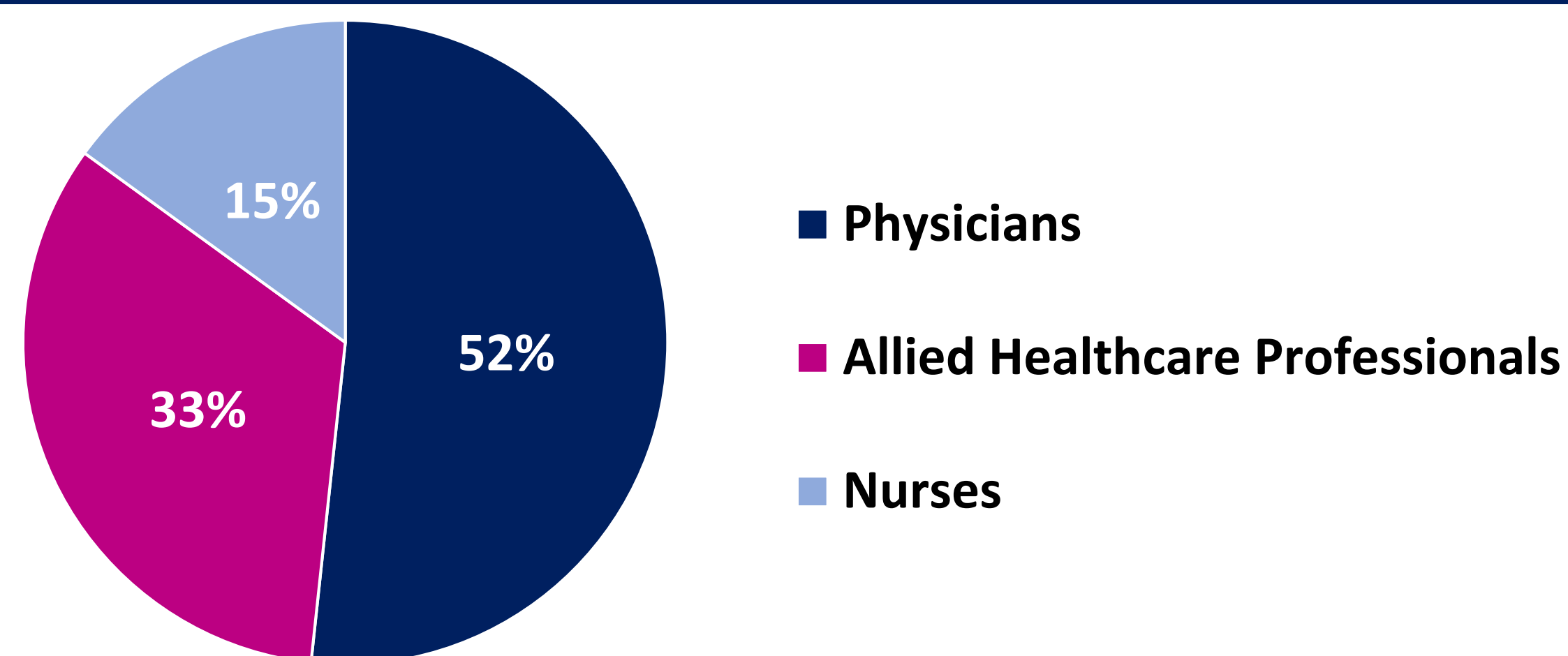
Recruitment: Seven professional stroke-related organisations distributed the survey to their mailing lists. We also distributed the survey via Twitter.

Data analysis: Descriptive statistics (percentages) were used to summarise data.

Key findings

- Healthcare professionals were aware of the key risk factors for post-stroke dementia (including: previous stroke, older age, atrophy).
- Healthcare professionals report that there might be benefits for patients from knowing that they are at high risk of post-stroke dementia.
- Healthcare professionals report that they generally do not discuss risk of post-stroke dementia at the time of stroke.

Results (N=60)



Are healthcare professionals aware of the risk factors associated with post-stroke dementia?

- **>90%** of respondents selected key risk factors including older age, had previous stroke, and global atrophy on a neuroimaging scan.

Would patients with stroke benefit from knowing if they are at high risk of dementia?

- **57%** of healthcare professionals think patients would benefit.
- **75%** of healthcare professionals think family/carers would benefit.

Do healthcare professionals routinely discuss the risk of dementia with patients with stroke?

- Of the healthcare professionals who cared for patients with acute stroke in the past year, **89%** (47/53) said they rarely or never discussed dementia with their patients.

Strengths and limitations

- This survey sought views from all healthcare professionals who care for patients with stroke throughout the UK.
- Responses were not representative of all healthcare professionals who care for patients with stroke.
- We did not research the views of patients with stroke and carers.

Future research

- How could follow-up care be tailored for patients at high risk of post-stroke dementia?
- How can healthcare professionals clearly communicate risk of post-stroke dementia to their patients?

Conclusion

- Although healthcare professionals felt it would be helpful to discuss the risk of post-stroke dementia, in practice, most said that they rarely or never discussed this with their patients .

References

1. Pendlebury ST, Rothwell PM. Prevalence, incidence, and factors associated with pre-stroke and post-stroke dementia: a systematic review and meta-analysis. The Lancet Neurology. 2009 Nov 1;8(11):1006-18.