**Clot-busting drugs improve diabetic stroke patients’ prospects, study reveals**

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Clot-busting drugs given to patients who have diabetes and previously suffered a stroke aid their recovery from a second stroke a new study has revealed.

The research by the University of Glasgow, published in the November 16, 2011, issue of Neurology, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology, was conducted because current approval by drug authorities suggests such drugs should not be given to these patients.

Dr Kennedy Lees, Professor of Cerebrovascular Medicine, said: “The use of these drugs – called thrombolytic therapy, can limit damage and disability due to blood clots.

However, current guidelines can keep people from receiving the therapy if they have a history of stroke and diabetes.”

The researchers compared data from 23,062 people who had received clot-busting therapy, along with 6,166 people who did not.

Measurements of how well people were able to function 90 days after the stroke were taken from both groups.

A total of 19 per cent of people had diabetes and 17 per cent had a prior stroke.

Stroke outcomes were measured on a scale of zero to six; zero represented no symptoms, three represented moderate disability where a person would require some help but is able to walk unassisted and six indicated death.

The study found that 43 percent of people with diabetes who received the clot-busting therapy had a disability score of two or less, compared with only 34 percent of diabetes patients who did not receive the therapy.

Additionally, the study found 48 percent of patients with previous stroke who received clot-busting therapy scored a two or less, compared with 35 percent of patients with previous stroke who did not receive the therapy.

“Better outcomes with therapy show that people with prior stroke or diabetes should not be excluded from receiving thrombolytic therapy,” said Lees.

The study was supported by the Virtual International Stroke Trials Archive (VISTA), the University of Glasgow and the European Stroke Organisation.  VISTA is a not for profit collaboration of clinical scientists that aim to make clinical trial data available for further research.  For more information about VISTA, visit <http://www.vista.gla.ac.uk>

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